

# SCSEP

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

# HANDBOOK

INDIANA



National Able Network®

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EDUCATION • EMPLOYMENT • OPPORTUNITY

# WELCOME

## SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

On behalf of National Able Network, I would like to welcome you to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). We are committed to your success and, during your participation in the program, you will have many opportunities to **build your skills** and **connect with employment**.

For more than 40 years, our mission has been to help showcase the value mature workers bring to the workplace. Today, our work is more important than ever: Did you know that **more than 40 percent of people age 55 or older** are seeking work?

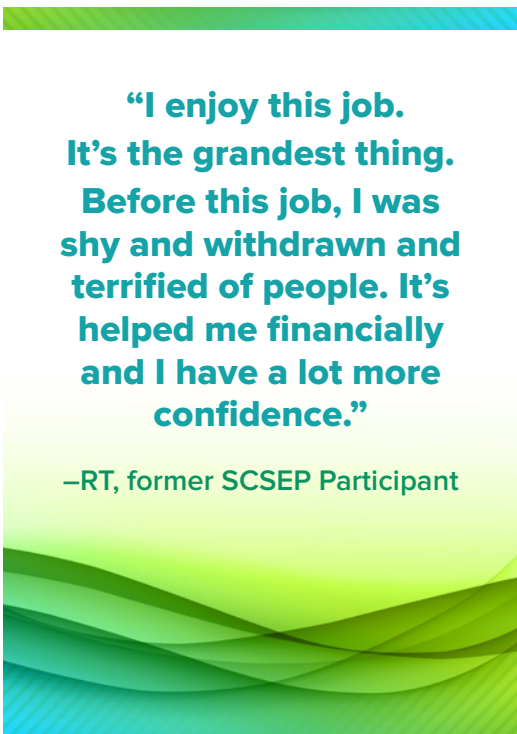
During your participation in the program, you can expect to participate in training that helps you develop the skills needed to reach your employment goals. Our training is specially designed with you in mind. In addition, you will have the opportunity to receive paid on-the-job training.

This SCSEP handbook will help guide you through the benefits of the program. You will also build an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a SCSEP participant, and you will learn about how you can benefit from our network of program partners and host agencies.

This handbook is reviewed and updated regularly. You should routinely reference our website [www.NationalAble.org](http://www.NationalAble.org) to access our most current SCSEP participant policies.

We look forward to celebrating your success!

**Bridget Altenburg**  
President and CEO



**“I enjoy this job.  
It’s the grandest thing.  
Before this job, I was  
shy and withdrawn and  
terrified of people. It’s  
helped me financially  
and I have a lot more  
confidence.”**

**–RT, former SCSEP Participant**

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## ABOUT NATIONAL ABLE NETWORK



### **NATIONAL ABLE NETWORK**

National Able Network, Inc. (Able) is a leading non-profit organization serving most-in-need job seekers through innovative workforce development programming. Able specializes in administering workforce development programs for mature workers, military veterans, single heads of household, and individuals who have experienced long-term unemployment.

Able's best-practice re-employment strategies provide individuals with critical skills that help them in their current job search and throughout their participation in the workforce. Through its service footprint in both the Midwest and East Coast, Able serves approximately 75,000 job seekers annually. As a service provider for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Able serves approximately 1,600 low-income seniors who provide more than 850,000 working hours at hundreds of community-based organizations each year.

# 2 SCSEP OVERVIEW



## WHAT IS SCSEP?

The Senior Community Service Employment Program, or SCSEP (the “program”) is a federally-funded employment training program under the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The program is governed by Title V of the Older Americans Act and was designed to support President Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty” campaign in the 1960s. The program has been continuously funded since its inception and is a direct response to economic changes and loss of employment.

National Able Network, Inc. administers the SCSEP program on behalf of the DOL. It is the intent of Able to follow the spirit of local, state, and federal laws governing the Equal Employment Opportunity, including the SCSEP Final Rule, and comply with Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act requirements.

Able works collaboratively with community-based non-profit and government organizations, known as “host agencies” to provide SCSEP participants with training opportunities which update their skills and get them employment ready. We adhere to Equal Employment Opportunity principles, including recruitment and hiring, compensation, benefits, training, promotion, discipline, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

The SCSEP is designed to be used in conjunction with other programs and services. These programs are provided by public, private and not-for-profit agencies to create holistic services that maximize the goals and skills of SCSEP participants to achieve employment and economic self-sufficiency. Able has curated a network of trusted partners so that SCSEP participants like you can easily access trusted resources that help you achieve your employment goals.

## TODAY

Navigating today’s job market can be challenging for job seekers of all ages, but especially for mature workers. Many mature adults are not financially ready for retirement and must seek work in a market where their job skills are rapidly being outpaced by technological advances. Additionally, many older workers, especially women, find themselves seeking employment for the first time or re-entering the workforce after many years of not participating in the job market. In a rapidly changing environment, a skill gap is often created between mature workers and available job openings, and they must continuously update their skills if they wish to compete.

The SCSEP addresses existing and emerging trends by helping participants build the skills and qualifications needed to compete for jobs. Experience and current research reflect that mature adults can modernize and improve their skill levels in a wide range of activities. SCSEP participants create a job search plan that integrates hands-on work training with traditional learning and other support services. The ultimate outcome is that participants will develop skills and qualifications resulting in greater employability and increased chances of gaining unsubsidized employment and obtaining economic self-sufficiency.

Able works with participants to identify their employment barriers and help them overcome or diminish those barriers. Participants work with career coaches to undergo an initial assessment process and develop an employment plan. Thereafter, participants gain access to a wide range of training and supportive service opportunities. These opportunities are designed to enhance skills not only essential in entering employment but also necessary to retain a job and remain economically self-sufficient.

## PROGRAM GOALS

The dual purpose of the SCSEP is to:

1. Help participants build skills and connections to employment opportunities in their community, and
2. Help participants achieve economic self-sufficiency through meaningful employment.

Participants will achieve these goals through a combination of on-the-job and instructional training, provided both directly by Able and with the help of Able's SCSEP collaborative partners. Other resources are available that will improve the participants' ability to contribute to the community or to an employer and ultimately become economically self-sufficient. Many participants will find that with these improved skills and experiences, they are more likely to achieve their skill development and employment goals. Able is proud to offer SCSEP participants with specially-designed opportunities including resume writing and interviewing skills, basic computer skills, employment workshops, and more.

Our offerings are designed to help SCSEP participants meet their employment goals and:

- Upgrade, add, or maintain job skills
- Provide added income during training
- Promote community involvement and networking opportunities
- Provide their local community with needed support

## ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the SCSEP, job seekers must meet several eligibility requirements including, but not limited to, the following:

- Be 55 years of age or older
- Meet income qualifications
- Be unemployed
- Reside in a National Able service area with available funding
- Be willing to provide community service and attend required meetings and training
- Be willing to develop a personalized "Individual Employment Plan" (IEP)
- Be willing to use all available resources that assist in job searches and economic self-sufficiency

# 3 SCSEP PROGRAM DETAILS

## PARTICIPANT PROCESS

We recognize that each SCSEP participant has unique employment and skill goals, so we have designed our program model in a way that allows for personalization throughout your participation in the program. The following is a visual representation of the process you can expect to experience as a SCSEP participant. To get the maximum benefit from the program, you will follow this process toward achievement of unsubsidized employment.





## **APPLICATION**

Program application procedures are required by DOL and local program funders and administered by Able staff. Applying for the SCSEP is the initial step in becoming a participant. Once you sign and submit your application including your SCSEP Participant Form and other mandated DOL eligibility documents, SCSEP staff will determine whether you meet eligibility requirements to enter and become a participant in the program. Note that you are not a participant in the program or entitled to any program benefits until your application has passed our review process and an Able authorized staff member has determined and formally communicated to you your final eligibility status. Your eligibility status will be reviewed annually to ensure that you continue to meet mandated SCSEP eligibility criteria. If you are ineligible for the SCSEP, staff will help connect you with comparable resources in your community, including employment services offered through your local American Job Center (AJC).

## **CAREER COACH**

As a SCSEP participant, you will be assigned to a career coach (or client service representative), who will work with you to identify and document your skill and employment goals, provide you with routine counseling, and guide you through your job search. The career coach will assist you with developing an employment plan and help you document your personal and professional goals, including identifying resources such as skill development and paid on-the-job training opportunities. They also work closely with a network of outreach partners and community-based host agencies to identify quality skill-enrichment opportunities that will result in transferrable employment skills and, ultimately, opportunities for you to obtain unsubsidized employment.

## **ORIENTATION**

After your application and eligibility requirements are determined, a member of the SCSEP team will provide you a formal orientation into the SCSEP program. During the orientation process, you will be given an overview of the program including a walkthrough of this handbook and corresponding policies and procedures. As part of your orientation, you will be provided, and must sign, an acknowledgement of your understanding of SCSEP policies and your responsibilities as a participant in the SCSEP.

## **INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF YOUR SKILLS AND INTERESTS**

Upon entry into the program, SCSEP program staff will perform an initial assessment of your work history, skills, interests, aptitudes, physical capabilities, and training needs to help us guide you toward success in the program and lead you to eventual unsubsidized employment and economic self-sufficiency. At least semi-annually, or more often when necessary, the SCSEP program staff will reassess your progress. After reassessments, skill gains will be documented in an employment plan.

## **INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN (IEP)**

Following the assessment of your training and development needs, your career coach will help you to define your employment goals by working with you to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) which outlines these goals and the expected timeline for completion. The IEP is based on your initial assessment and it serves as your personal roadmap to success. It is designed to identify the steps you will take to eliminate the barriers to your employment.

## SMART GOALS ARE:

**S**

Specific

**M**

Measurable

**A**

Attainable

**R**

Relevant

**T**

Timely

The goals in your IEP are developed using the “SMART” method.

The IEP is an agreement similar to a contract. You must agree to make reasonable effort toward achieving the goals listed on your IEP. This includes participating in all training and other activities as outlined in your goals. It is very important that goals established in your IEP are met. Failure to show effort toward achieving your goals can have serious consequences including your termination from the program.

Your IEP will be updated semi-annually, or less, should you make significant progress toward your goals. If there is a significant change in your training situation (e.g. a host agency is not available), you and your career coach will work together to update your IEP. In the event of a major change, it may also be necessary to perform a re-assessment of your training needs. Only your career coach has the authority to approve and make such changes.

Within six (6) months of your initial IEP development, you will work with your career coach to prepare a resume. You must also begin independently researching job opportunities and, where appropriate, provide your job search status to your coach by the time of your six-month re-assessment.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSIGNMENT (CSA)

Community service assignments (CSAs) or “training assignments” are the heart of the SCSEP program. During the program, in order to build the skills necessary to be successful in obtaining and retaining unsubsidized employment, SCSEP Staff will work with a host agency to develop your training assignment. Training in a realistic job environment provides learning and feedback which contribute to your long-term success.

### HOST AGENCY

Host agencies are community-based organizations, government agencies, or nonprofits that have partnered with us to provide you with the opportunity to obtain specific skills required to achieve your employment goals. Your host agency will provide you with hands-on training opportunities that simulate the skill demands of your community job market.

### HOST AGENCY SITE SUPERVISOR

The site supervisor plays an important role in preparing you for employment. The supervisor is a representative of the host agency that will provide you with direct, on-site, training and supervision. The site supervisor is responsible for assisting you with tailoring your assignment to build the skills and behaviors you need to meet your goals and be successful in obtaining and retaining unsubsidized employment. Your site supervisor’s expectations are documented and reviewed through collaboration with you and your career coach.

## TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

Prior to beginning your CSA, you will work with your career coach and host agency supervisor to identify the tasks and activities you should expect to perform during your assignment. Your training activities will be documented on a Community Service Assignment Form and a Task and Activities Form. These forms outline your specific areas of training, your training schedule and the role of your host agency supervisor. The SCSEP Staff will determine your weekly training hours at your CSA based on current program funding levels. On average, participants train at their CSA for approximately 20-25 hours per week, and there are times throughout your participation in the program where the hours worked may fluctuate. Able's SCSEP Staff will communicate changes to the amount of training hours by email and by phone. In addition to your CSA, you may also participate in other required program activities (e.g. computer training). Hours worked at your CSA and hours spent participating in other required program activities should be documented accordingly on your timesheet.

The below is a summary of what to expect from your host agency, supervisor, and the services provided by SCSEP:

- Be treated respectfully as a trainee at your host agency.
- Receive an assignment that is a reasonable fit with your personal preferences, life experience and skills.
- Be given the opportunity to familiarize yourself with your host agency's policies, people and programs, along with what is expected during training.
- Participate in the development and update to a training description that accurately reflects your assignment and activities.
- Obtain diverse skills training that align with your goals and objectives and opportunity to learn new skills or demonstrate existing skills.
- Have opportunity to participate in additional training that enhances your ability to take on more assignments at your host agency.
- Be provided with a safe and orderly workspace that is conducive to promoting performance and learning.
- Receive professional, respectful, and thoughtful guidance from an informed supervisor.

## SKILLS TRAINING

Training activities that you participate in outside of your host agency CSA are referred to as "skills training". Skills training consists of both instructor-led group courses as well as individual efforts and should align and help advance the goals set forth in your IEP. For example, an IEP may require vocational or computer training that includes attendance in a "classroom" environment where workbooks, exercises and reading assignments are utilized. Other skills training may require self-guided efforts such as reading books or utilizing employment or job training resources in a computer lab at your local library, American Job Center, or other comparable resource.

National Able Network®

# JUMPSTART<sup>a</sup>

ACCELERATE YOUR JOB SEARCH

To round out your SCSEP experience, Able offers a nationally-recognized job readiness curriculum that equips job seekers with the skills and tools needed to compete in the job market: JUMPSTART!

Depending on your availability and place of residence, Able offers JUMPSTART! in both a live in-person or virtual classroom. The live classroom experience requires participants to travel to a local office. The virtual classroom experience has all of the same benefits of in-person instruction but allows participants to participate in the workshops at their home, work, or public computer of their choosing.

The JUMPSTART! curriculum includes four core modules to help you develop your job search toolkit:



**THE ULTIMATE  
GUIDE  
TO RESUMES**



**INTERVIEW  
SUCCESS:  
ALL THE ANSWERS**



**MY SKILLS, MY GOALS:  
THE TARGETED  
JOB SEARCH**



**LINKEDIN: MAXIMIZE  
YOUR PROFESSIONAL  
POTENTIAL**

In addition, Able offers JUMPSTART modules that enhance other job skills such as **Customer Service**, **Social Media**, and more.

## AMERICAN JOB CENTER (AJC/ONE-STOP)

Within 90 days of your acceptance into the program, you are required to register as a job seeker with the appropriate state employment agency or American Job Center (AJC) to perform regular follow-up on relevant job openings. These facilities offer free employment resources, job fairs, job leads, and other resources. Immediately contact your career coach if you are unable to register within the required enrollment date or you are unsure about the location of the facility closest to you.

## JOB OPENINGS AT HOST AGENCY

As you train at your CSA, there may be opportunities to apply for open positions. We encourage you to be on the lookout for and apply to job openings at your host agency. Please inform your career coach when an opportunity is available. The career coach will assist you with the application process for open positions.

## ENTERED EMPLOYMENT

You are considered to have “entered employment” when you obtain employment with an organization that uses no government funds to pay directly the wages you earn (“unsubsidized” employment). If you lose your job, you are entitled to re-enter the program and be assigned to a new host agency without having to re-enroll if your employment lasted for fewer than 30 days in the first 90 days after leaving the program (exit).

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Supportive services are a variety of services available to participants to assist them with successfully completing the program and enter and retain employment.

The types of supportive services include, but are not limited to:

- Transportation
- Health care and medical services
- Job-related or personal counseling
- Incidentals such as work shoes, badges, uniforms, eyeglasses, or tools
- Child and adult care
- Temporary shelter
- Follow-up services
- Housing option
- Health Insurance
- Social Security, public assistance, and other senior services

Once you have left the program for unsubsidized employment and at the discretion of your career coach, you may receive supportive services during the first 12 months if helpful to your remaining employed. Supportive services are not an entitlement and may be granted at the discretion of the career coach.

## EVALUATION

SCSEP is a hands-on employment training program. Honest and accurate evaluation is important to identify progress and satisfactory learning and determine what additional activities or resources are needed to assist you with finding unsubsidized employment and becoming economically self-sufficient. Your career coach or host agency supervisor may periodically perform evaluations of your training progress.

## FOLLOW-UP

As part of DOL regulations, during the first year after you exit the program, career coaches are required to contact your employer to obtain an update on your employment status. Your coach must perform this activity on three (3) separate occasions after your exit. If we are unable to reach your employer in a timely manner, we will contact you via phone or email to discuss your employment status. We kindly request your assistance with this requirement.

# 4 NATIONAL PROGRAM POLICIES

SCSEP is a federally-funded training program and is not employment. Participants are not employees of National Able Network or their host agency – they are trainees. This handbook and associated procedures, forms, etc. do not constitute a work contract or a guarantee that you will obtain employment. Participants who exit the program are not entitled to unemployment compensation or payment for unused benefits and may not carry over allowable benefits from one program year to the next.

## **WAGES**

SCSEP is a paid training program and you will earn the hourly federal, state, or local minimum wage, whichever is highest. You may be paid the highest applicable required wage while receiving Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) intensive services. The highest applicable required wage is either the minimum wage applicable under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or the State or local minimum wage for the most nearly comparable covered employment. Host agencies may not provide a subsidy to the minimum wage.

## **WITHHOLDINGS**

Social Security, Federal and State taxes are withheld, if required, and W-2 forms will be issued at the appropriate time.

## **TRAINING HOURS**

Training hours need to be reasonable and conducted approximately 10-25 hours per week. Hours you train per pay period is dictated by available funding guidelines. Your career coach will notify you and your site supervisor of approved training hours and will contact you immediately should your hours require adjustment. You may not train extra hours at your host agency beyond your regularly scheduled and authorized hours, and you may not “bank hours” by moving your time from one week and making them up in another without authorization. Any deviation in your schedule requires approval from the career coach.

## **MEAL PERIODS AND BREAKS**

Meal periods and breaks are not paid training time. Though not paid, you are permitted to take reasonable meal and break time at your discretion. Food and drink is prohibited in computer labs or in close proximity to other electronic equipment.

## **OVERTIME**

As a SCSEP participant, you are not eligible for overtime compensation and may not train more than eight (8) hours in a 24-hour period or 40 hours in a week.

## TIMEKEEPING

Able uses the Paycom® online time and attendance system to track your time and payroll. You will receive Paycom® training to show you how to use this system.

## NATIONAL DURATIONAL LIMITS

The length of time you are enrolled in the SCSEP depends on your goals and the length of time required to get you employment ready. Your Individual Employment Plan (IEP) will guide you toward timely achievement of your goals. The maximum durational limit (time allowed for you to be enrolled in the program), is 48 months, although the average participant completes the program within 27 months. Participants with significant needs may be considered for a one time, 12-month, extension.

*NOTE: Only National program participants are eligible for extensions.*

## GIFTS

You are prohibited from receiving rewards, gifts, bonuses, or any other form of additional compensation from any source, including host agencies, for your performance of your training assignment duties. Award certificates or similar items of non-material value are allowed.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to maintaining your community service assignment (CSA). Early notification of your inability to attend or arrive at training at your scheduled time must be communicated to your host agency supervisor to allow them to plan their day accordingly. You are responsible for notifying your site supervisor and career coach if you are going to arrive late or be absent from your assignment. Good attendance is an important factor of your IEP and program performance. Excellent reviews are important for references and should be considered when seeking unsubsidized employment.

If you are absent from your training assignment for three (3) or more consecutive days without prior authorization, you are considered to have resigned from your training assignment and you may be terminated from the program. Recurring tardiness or absences may also result in your termination. Refer to the Leave of Absence (LOA) policy for information regarding extended absence requests.

## NATIONAL TIME OFF

You will not receive paid time off. If you require time off due to illness, jury duty, federal or host agency holidays, pending your site supervisor and career coach approval, you may reschedule training time if that time is made up in the same pay period, or the week immediately preceding or immediately following the pay period. If you require more than three (3) consecutive days off from your assignment, you must complete a Time Off Request Form and submit it to your career coach. There is no bereavement pay.

When called to report for potential jury duty, you must immediately notify your host agency supervisor and career coach if your service is required on a day when you are scheduled to train. Once released from duty, you must return to your host agency and train your normally scheduled hours. You will not be compensated for your time; however, you may reschedule training time in alignment with the time off policy.



## **SICK DAYS**

You are encouraged to remain at home during illness. If you become ill, you must notify your host agency supervisor and coach as soon as possible. Pending your site supervisor and career coach approval, you may reschedule training time if that time is made up in the same pay period, or the week immediately preceding or immediately following the pay period. Refer to the LOA policy regarding illness for three (3) or more consecutive days.

## **ANNUAL PHYSICAL / WAIVER**

At the time of enrollment, and annually thereafter, you are entitled to receive an annual physical medical examination. Physical examinations are a process through which a medical professional investigates the body for signs of disease and devises treatment plans.

Physical examinations are a fringe benefit and are voluntary – you are not required to obtain one. The sole exception is that, if necessary for your training assignment, your host agency may require an occupational assessment with reasonable accommodation. Able is not authorized to request or obtain access to your physical examination results. Annually, you must sign a Physical Exam Waiver as proof of your knowledge of this benefit.

## **VOLUNTEERISM**

In addition to the primary goals of assisting participants with entering unsubsidized employment and achieving economic self-sufficiency, SCSEP promotes participation in additional non-SCSEP related community service activities. Therefore, you are permitted to volunteer at state, local and government agencies, as well as faith- and community-based organizations. You are prohibited from performing volunteer services at your host agency.

Volunteer work can include work that you perform on your own and not through an organization. Potential participants who are performing volunteer work at the time of their enrollment into the program will remain eligible for program.

## **EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTION**

Applicants must be unemployed at the time of enrollment. If you obtain employment, either full- time or part-time, while enrolled in the program, you must immediately notify your career coach.

Employment does not apply to casual, non-recurring labor for which you may be compensated (e.g. occasionally shoveling a neighbor's driveway or baby-sitting for a friend's family). Also, participation in the Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, Senior Demonstration, or Senior Volunteer Programs are not considered employment.



## REASSIGNMENT POLICY

Periodically, you may be required to rotate to another host agency due to any one or combination of factors, which include, but are not limited to:

- Re-assessment of your skills and aptitudes, performance or changes in your IEP goals that indicate a needed change in your training assignment.
- Changes to the host agency location or non-profit status.
- Termination of Able's agreement with the host agency.
- Changes in funding of the program or nonprofit status of the host agency.
- The length of time that you have spent on the host agency's training assignment.

Generally, notice of reassignment will be provided to you and your site supervisor 30 days in advance of the change, but this is not possible in all situations. These changes may impact your IEP and you are expected to participate in the updates and be fully aware of impact of the changes on your training assignment.

## CLASSROOM AND EDUCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY

Educational training is key to your success in the SCSEP program. Training can be facilitated in a number of ways including instructor-led classes, self-taught lessons and/or self-paced training. In all cases, the training must be documented in your IEP training goals.

If there is a fee for your instructor-led or computer lab courses, you must complete a Request for Supportive Services form and submit it to your career coach in advance of your registration.

Your IEP must be updated to accurately reflect and document your participation in training. If for some reason training cannot be accomplished due to factors such as a shortage of funding, your IEP must reflect this and the related goals should be removed and revised to reflect these challenges. Whether funded through other sources or self-led, all training must be documented in your IEP.

Periodically, we hold participant meetings (e.g. Quarterly Meeting). Typically, the purpose of these meetings is to provide you with important program-related matters. Meetings are considered classroom training, and you are required to attend. We will give you no less than 24-hours notice to attend, and host agency supervisors are required to provide you adequate time to arrive timely at the meeting. Absence from three (3) consecutive meetings without approval of project director is a cause of termination.

## PERSONAL EXPENSES

Reimbursement for lodging, travel and/or meal expenses shall only be provided in conjunction with authorized training activities where such expenses have been pre-approved. In most cases, personal expenses are not authorized for reimbursement.

## COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE

Policies established by your host agency regarding computer and internet usage must be followed. Generally, computer usage is for business and training purposes only and should not be used for personal matters or entertainment. Keep in mind that computer resources are owned by the host agency and can be monitored at any time. Excessive personal use of the internet may result in disciplinary action. Repeated abuse may result in termination from the SCSEP.

## **PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

The address for National Able Network or your host agency may not be used for personal mail. Mail equipment, postage and supplies are not for personal use. Host agency site supervisors will inform you of their email and voicemail policies.

Making personal calls from the host agency telephones should be made only with the approval of the host agency supervisor and when agency business will not be interrupted. Keep calls short and infrequent and be sure calls are local. If you need to make a long-distance call you must obtain your supervisor's approval. Additionally, personal calls made from your personal phone should be limited to personal unpaid break times. Personal phones should be made silent during training hours to minimize disruptions.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

You are expected to adhere to dress codes and norms established at your host agency. Dressing appropriately and exercising excellent hygiene improves how you are perceived and results in a better training environment.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

You may not perform your community service assignments at host agencies that perform activities that benefit any political party, nor are you permitted to engage in partisan or nonpartisan political activities during paid SCSEP training hours. Training assignments for the Office of Congress, a state or local legislator, or on any staff of a legislative committee are also prohibited.

## **RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

You are not permitted to engage in any religious activities during paid training time. The decision to observe religious holidays is solely that of the participant. You must notify your site supervisor and career coach if you anticipate impact to your training assignment schedule.

## **HOST AGENCY CLOSURE**

When a host agency is closed on a day that you would normally train, pending your site supervisor and career coach approval, you may reschedule training time if that time is made up in the same pay period, or the week immediately preceding or immediately following the pay period.

National Able Network utilizes various notification means for emergency closures. You should check with your local emergency notification system, the National Able Network's website ([www.nationalable.org](http://www.nationalable.org)), or contact our customer service department at (855) 994-8300, prior to reporting to your host agency.

## SAFETY

Able prioritizes the safety and welfare of SCSEP participants. No task is so urgent that time cannot be taken to do it safely. You and your host agency site supervisors must exercise caution and reasonable judgment to prevent accidents. To ensure a safe training environment, you are required to observe the following policies:

- Immediately seek first aid and support for any and all injuries, however minor they may seem.
- Report an injury within 24 hours to your career coach and host agency site supervisor.
- Adhere to your community service assignment training description responsibilities.
- Do not lift more than 15 lbs, climb ladders, use power tools or operate any vehicle or heavy equipment on behalf of the host agency.
- Do not use your personal vehicle to perform host agency activities.
- Follow all prescription drug warnings and directions as well as the SCSEP drug and alcohol policies noted in this handbook. Immediately notify your career coach if taking prescription drugs that could affect training performance or behavior.
- Wear protective clothing and use required personal protective equipment appropriate for the task being performed.
- Read and follow every safety precaution and rule at your host agency, and report to your host agency site supervisor and career coach if you note any unsafe conditions, equipment, or practices.
- Accept any opportunities to serve on safety committees, attend safety training sessions, and otherwise promote safe training conditions.

You may never be the only individual present at your host agency worksite, and you may never be given responsibility to open or close their facility.

During inclement weather, use reasonable judgement to decide whether it is prudent to travel to your host agency site. The fact that the site may be open or nearby should never deter you from using appropriate safety precautions. Notify your site supervisor and your career coach when inclement weather will prevent your arrival at training.

## TRANSPORTATION

Use of your personal vehicle to reach your host agency site is permitted; however, use of your vehicle to perform host-agency duties is prohibited.

Participants training with National Able Network as their host agency may drive their personal vehicle to perform this training. Mileage will be reimbursed for up to the current rate authorized by Able or approved by the U.S. Department of Labor provided that the costs are substantiated in writing, within budgeted transportation limits, and are not available from other sources. Request for reimbursement must be submitted within 30 days of the expense.

Able client service representatives who drive as part of their training assignment must have the following documentation on file and updated annually:

- A copy of a valid unexpired driver's license in the state of their host agency.
- Proof of insurance with yourself as the named insured.
- Evidence of the policy's compliance with the state's minimum personal automobile liability insurance requirements.
- Date of expiration.

## **DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT**

Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, handicap, age, political affiliation or opinion, or ancestry as governed by Local, State and Federal Law is prohibited. If you believe that you have experienced discrimination or harassment you must immediately report the incident to your career coach or another Able representative. Harassment will not be tolerated and is defined by the policies of the Able and the host agency. For more information, see the Standards of Conduct and Terminations for Cause sections.

## **DRUG, ALCOHOL & FIREARM POLICY**

Use of illegal drugs, alcohol, and cannabis is strictly forbidden while involved with the SCSEP program. Use or possession of any illegal substances, firearms, or other dangerous weapons while performing your host agency assignment or while carrying out objectives required by the IEP is prohibited and grounds for immediate termination from the program. Use of legally-prescribed medications are allowable if do not limit your ability to effectively perform your duties or endanger the safety of others.

Evidence of non-compliance with this policy may result in immediate termination from the program.

## **NEPOTISM AND SUPERVISION**

Federal Regulations forbid a person who works in a decision-making capacity (whether compensated or not) to supervise immediate family members. This policy applies to Able staff, participants, and any other individuals receiving wages (directly or indirectly) from the program. In the event an applicable state or local legal requirement regarding nepotism is more restrictive than this provision, that requirement must be followed.

Participants are prohibited from overseeing or assessing the job performance of others. This includes matters such as managing schedules, authorizing time off, contributing to staff evaluations, etc. Immediately contact your career coach if your host agency assigns a task that requires you to take on the role of a supervisor.

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

You must adhere to high standards of conduct. These standards include but are not limited to the matters listed below. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in your immediate removal from the program.

- Falsifying documents is a criminal offense that involves the altering, changing, modifying, passing or possessing of a document for an unlawful purpose – this includes participant eligibility records and timesheets.
- Theft.
- Possession or being under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, illegal substances, firearms or other dangerous weapons.
- Harassment or abuse of fellow participants or other staff.
- Excessive absenteeism, tardiness or personal breaks (e.g. lunch, coffee, smoking).
- Violent behavior such as fighting or belligerence.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of property or potential injury of others.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality of the host agency information, procedures, staff and clients is required. Confidentiality policies of the host agency must be followed, and sound judgement should be used when handling confidential information. A breach in confidentiality could be grounds for termination from the program.

## **PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (PII)**

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is information that, if disclosed to unauthorized parties, could result in harm to the individual whose name or identity is linked to the information. To participate in the SCSEP, the DOL requires that Able collect and create documents which may contain your PII. You must sign a release acknowledging and authorizing us to collect and use your PII for program purposes. You must also acknowledge that if, during the course of your assignment, you come into contact with the PII affiliated with your host agency, you will protect the PII of others.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

Able does not perform nor does the Department of Labor require criminal background checks for eligibility purposes of the program. However, host agencies may require criminal background checks and/or drug screenings as a condition for training with their agency. You may choose to allow screening at your own discretion. Able is not responsible for the performance or cost associated with criminal background checks or drug screenings.

## **PROGRAM CONTINGENCY**

While Able anticipates continued funding of the program, it is not guaranteed. Changes in funding will affect the number of hours available for you to train. In the event that you must seek enrollment in an alternative program, we encourage you to take advantage of any available services and training and continue to routinely seek unsubsidized employment.

## **CHANGE IN CONTACT INFORMATION**

Immediately notify your career coach if your personal or host agency information change including your address, phone, income or household size, emergency contact information, your site supervisor, training schedule, or any other change that may impact your training assignment.

# 5 NATIONAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

SCSEP is committed to providing a training environment that is free of discrimination, harassment or dangerous or abusive situations. If you believe that you have been the victim of such treatment, you must perform these procedures immediately following the event:

Prior to filing an official grievance, you are encouraged to discuss the complaint with your career coach, either by telephone or in writing, within five (5) business days of the occurrence of the complaint. If you are unable to do so, or the grievance involves that career coach, you may start the complaint process by filing an official grievance with the program director. In either instance, you must file your grievance within twenty (20) business days of the occurrence of the event.

The career coach or program director will work with you to provide a solution or explanation within ten (10) business days of receipt of your official complaint. If you are unsatisfied with the answer or resolution to the complaint from the career coach, you may then file an official grievance directly with the program director.

- The grievance should clearly explain the circumstances around the event and the event itself.
- Be as detailed as possible, including times, dates, locations and names of people directly involved or witnesses of the event.
- The career coach will schedule an informal hearing with the parties involved.
- If resolution of the grievance is possible, the program director will document the grievance on a Grievance Resolution Agreement, and all parties must sign and date.
- Copies of the resolution agreement will be made available to both sides.

If no resolution is found, grievances should be mailed or emailed to National Able Network's President & CEO, Bridget Altenburg at [baltenburg@nationalable.org](mailto:baltenburg@nationalable.org).

If the complaint involves allegations of violations of federal equal opportunity and/or nondiscrimination laws, you may file directly with the U.S. Department of Labor's Civil Rights Center without initiating the SCSEP grievance process. Complaints may be directed or mailed to the Director, Civil Rights Center, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-4123, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington D.C. 20210.



## NATIONAL TERMINATION POLICY

We will seek to avoid termination whenever possible and will instead use progressive discipline and corrective action procedures, except in the case of serious violations, such as fraud, violence, or threats to health or safety. Participants are involuntarily terminated when it is clear that a serious program violation has occurred. When possible, you will be referred to other community resources for assistance. You will receive a written notice 30 days prior to any termination and a copy of our grievance policy.

You may only be terminated for reasons 1-7 below.

- 1. Termination Due to Provision of False Information:** If, at any time, National Able Network determines that you were incorrectly declared eligible because you knowingly provided false information, we will immediately give you written notice explaining the reason(s) for termination and you will be terminated in 30 days. You will be placed on leave without pay during the 30-day notice period.
- 2. Termination Due to Income Ineligibility Determined at Recertification:** If, at any time, National Able Network finds that you are no longer eligible for enrollment, you will receive a 30-day written notice explaining the reason(s) for termination and the right to file an appeal during the 30-day period. You will be allowed to continue your host agency assignment during the 30-day notice period.
- 3. Termination Due to Incorrect Initial Eligibility Determination:** If, at any time, we incorrectly determined you to be eligible for the program through no fault of your own, we will give you immediate written notice explaining the reason(s) for termination and will terminate you 30 days after the written notice. You will be allowed to continue the community service assignment during the 30-day notice period.
- 4. Entering Unsubsidized Employment:** If National Able Network determines that you entered unsubsidized employment while enrolled, you will be removed immediately from the community service assignment and be placed on leave without pay. You will be terminated no sooner than 30 days after issuance of a written notice. The notice will outline the reason for termination and the right to file an appeal.
- 5. Termination Due to 48 Month Durational Limit:** Once you reach your 48-Month individual durational limit, you must exit the program. At the program director discretion, the 48-month durational limit may be extended for an additional 12 months if you have a severe disability, are frail, are over 75 years of age, meet Social Security age requirements but are not receiving Social Security benefits, live in an area of persistent unemployment or have severely limited employment prospects, or have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills.

*NOTE: Only National program participants are eligible for extensions.*

- 6. Termination for Cause:** You may be terminated for cause when you commit willful misconduct that conflicts with the terms or goals of the program, including intentional violations of reasonable program rules and directives, or for failure to comply with the terms of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) without good cause. Absence from three (3) consecutive meetings without approval of project director is a cause of termination. In most cases, you will be given one verbal and one written warning with specific corrective measures that must be taken to resolve the problem so that you will have a meaningful opportunity to correct the behavior. You may be terminated no sooner than 30 days after



issuance of a written notice which outlines the reason for termination and the right to file an appeal. You will be permitted to remain in the community service assignment during the 30-day notice period, **except** for serious violations like fraud, violence, threatening, destroying or stealing property, or abusive or harassing language or behavior. In this case, you may be placed on leave without pay. Terminations for cause may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Falsification of official records such as timesheets.
- b. Physical violence or intentional destruction of property.
- c. Obscene, abusive, harassing or threatening language or behavior.
- d. Workplace harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or disability.
- e. Causing an imminent threat to health or safety.
- f. Violation of approved break policy, including failure to return from an approved break by the required date without due notice or good cause.
- g. Insubordination, that is, intentionally refusing to carry out the direction or instructions of a host agency supervisor or National Able Network staff member without good cause.
- h. Failure without good cause to maintain reasonable contact with your case manager.
- i. Failure to provide required program eligibility information at recertification.
- j. Three (3) or more unauthorized absences from the host agency or training site without good cause or proper notice, or a pattern of unexcused tardiness.
- k. Non-compliance with Able's drug, alcohol and cannabis policies.
- l. Theft or destruction of property.
- m. Intentional loss, damage, destruction, or disclosure, or unauthorized use of property, records, or information.
- n. Conviction of a felony or of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace while on or off duty, or while on duty away from the workplace

**7. IEP-Related Terminations:** you may be terminated from the program if you display a pattern of consistent and conscious failure to follow the steps mutually agreed upon and outlined in the IEP and with other terms and conditions of the IEP without good cause, including:

- a. Refusal to accept two job offers or referrals for employment consistent with your IEP without good cause or extenuating circumstances that would hinder you from moving to unsubsidized employment.
- b. Refusal to register and follow up with the local American Job Center for unsubsidized employment opportunities.
- c. Refusal to regularly attend SCSEP training and employment meetings.
- d. Failure to submit job search logs as required.
- e. Failure to accept and participate in training opportunities outlined in your IEP.
- f. Failure to accept a new community service assignment to enhance skill development in support of your IEP goals.
- g. Failure to accept supportive services that will enhance your ability to participate in a community service assignment consistent with your IEP.

**8. Cumulative Leave of Absence-Related Terminations:** You may be on leave of absence no more than 60 calendar days in any program year. This is a cumulative total for the entire program year and will be strictly enforced. We want to ensure all participants are treated fairly and equally and are able to fully experience the goals of the program.



# 7 NATIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

If you require more than three consecutive (3) days off from your training assignment, you may be granted a voluntary leave of absence (LOA) by submitting a Time-Off Request Form to your career coach. There are three types of leaves of absence you may take: Personal, Administrative, Family/Health. LOAs are granted for up to 60 cumulative calendar days per program year. Leaves beyond 60 days must be approved by a program director. The following conditions must be met to ensure compliance with your LOA request.

1. Give your coach and host agency supervisor at least one week's notice.
2. A Time-Off Request Form with the scheduled date of return must be submitted to your primary SCSEP office for signature by the career coach.
3. The career coach will confirm the cumulative number of days you have already taken during the program year and notify you as to whether your full LOA request can be accommodated. If you have fewer LOA days available than you are requesting, your coach will revise the scheduled return date on the Time-Off Request Form and notify you of the change.
4. A copy of the signed form will be mailed to your home address on file. The Time-Off Request Form also serves as 30-day notice of exit, from the beginning of the approved leave time. If you do not return to your community service assignment by your scheduled return date you will be exited from the program effective the day after the scheduled date of return. We will provide you written notice of your exit and you are encouraged to reapply when you are ready to participate in the program again. You must obtain approval before the leave. Failure to request approval will not be considered and may be cause for an involuntary termination.

Approved leave without pay will not be counted toward your individual duration limit if the leave period is at least four (4) days and pre-approved by your career coach.

A "Return to Training" notice or doctor's authorization are required before you can return to your training assignment following a medical leave of absence that exceeds five (5) consecutive business days. Your career coach will make any necessary arrangements for you to return to your training assignment.

You must maintain regular contact with your career coach during your LOA.



## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICIES & PII RELEASE

“Confidential Information” means information that is not commonly available to the general public or is required by law or regulation to be protected from disclosure to third parties. Confidential Information includes information concerning Able or affiliated organization’s employees, participants, services or business operations. Such information can be acquired by any means and in any form, written, spoken or electronic.

Personally Identifiable information (PII) is information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual. If PII is disclosed to unauthorized parties, that disclosure could result in harm to the individual whose name or identity is linked to the information.

Federal law, the OMB, and ETA policies require that PII and other confidential information be protected. To ensure that we are in compliance with federal law regarding the use of PII and other confidential data, National Able has implemented the following policies required of all Able staff, program aides and participants:

- Encrypt data when storing or transmitting PII and all other sensitive information and require that confidential data is only processed through use of Able’s equipment.
- Store information in locked areas that are physically safe from access by unauthorized persons.
- Restrict access to only those staff who require it to perform in their official capacity.
- Advise personnel who have access to sensitive and confidential information of the nature of the information and the importance of safeguards required to protect it.
- Before giving access to PII and other confidential information, require that staff and program aides acknowledge their understanding of PII policies and that they may be liable to civil and criminal penalties for improper disclosure.
- Do not extract data for non-program purposes and ensure that PII has been obtained in conformity with federal and state laws regarding the confidentiality of information.
- Do not retain confidential data beyond the period of time required to use it for assessment or to comply with federal record retention policies. Thereafter, all confidential data and PII must be destroyed.

To participate in the SCSEP program, the DOL requires that Able collect and create documents which may contain your PII or other confidential information. This serves as your notification and authorization for National Able Network to collect and use this information for program purposes. You are also acknowledging that if, during the course of your assignment, you come into contact with the PII or other confidential information of others affiliated with the National Able Network or your Host agency, you will protect that data in compliance with the above policies.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), have read National Able Network’s Confidentiality policy and PII release and acknowledge that I have received a copy of this agreement.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## NATIONAL PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERMS OF ENROLLMENT

I acknowledge and agree to the following requirements of my participation in National Able Network's SCSEP program:

### TRAINING PROGRAM

- I understand that SCSEP is not employment, but a subsidized training program designed to assist me with enhancing my employability skills.
- I have participated in a SCSEP orientation and received a participant handbook. The handbook outlines my responsibility as a SCSEP participant, the responsibility of my host agency, and the policies and guidelines of the program.

### CAREER COACHING

- I agree to participate fully with SCSEP Staff in developing a plan of action for my training and development. This cooperation will include completion of an assessment of my skills and interests, and completion of my Individual Employment Plan (IEP).
- I understand that I will receive a semi-annual reassessment during which my IEP will be updated based on my goals and to ensure program compliance.
- I agree to timely complete and submit any documentation requested by my career coach including resumes, job search logs and any other reports or evaluations.
- I agree to attend all trainings, classes, job or resource fairs, employment support, social service appointments, networking activities and employment interviews as required by my IEP or career coach.
- I understand that my eligibility for SCSEP participation is subject to annual recertification.

### TRAINING ASSIGNMENT

- I understand that I am assigned to my host agency by National Able Network, and my career coach will determine my assignments based on my IEP Goals.
- I agree to perform the assigned duties noted on my Community Service Assignment (CSA) description, and I will inform my career coach if I am requested to perform duties not in my CSA Description. I will not perform these duties without the written approval of my career coach.
- I will use reasonable judgement when performing tasks that might create an unsafe environment for me or others, and I will report to my host agency supervisor and career coach if I note any unsafe conditions, equipment, or practices at my worksite.
- I agree to accept periodic rotations to new training assignment as may be required. I understand that these rotations are designed to improve my marketable skills in the job market; to assist in developing a path to self-sufficiency; or may be required as the needs of the CSA dictates.
- I understand that my enrollment in SCSEP and the number of training assignment hours I can provide depend on the availability of funds. I understand that my hours could be reduced or my hourly wage may be increased or decreased at any time.

- I understand that volunteering is activity that SCSEP encourages but volunteering at my host agency is prohibited and in violation of the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act.
- I have provided my written acknowledgement of the National Able Network Personally Identifiable Information (PII) policy and release. I am aware that my PII will be used by National Able Network SCSEP staff for program purposes. I also agree that if I come into contact the PII or other confidential information of others, including that of other participants or my host agency, I will protect that data in compliance with the PII policy.

## COMPENSATION

- I have read and agree to comply with the SCSEP payroll policy and understand that all payments I receive will be through direct deposit into my bank account or through a debit card program. National Able Network does not provide paper checks or paystubs. I will be issued a user ID for electronic access to all payroll information.
- I will not receive overtime compensation and I am prohibited from receiving any other form of additional compensation from any source, including host agencies.
- I understand that I will not be eligible to apply for or receive unemployment insurance benefits if I am terminated or leave the program for any reason.

## PROGRAM EXIT

- I understand that, for up to thirteen (13) months following my exit from the program, National Able staff may contact me regarding program-related matters including inquiry regarding the status of my employment.
- If I exit for employment, I authorize my employer to release to National Able Network information regarding my employment status and wages for a period of thirteen (13) months from the date of my exit from the SCSEP.
- I understand that any information provided by my employer may be used solely for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed to anyone not connected to the SCSEP for individual purposes.
- I have read and understand the policies regarding termination and understand that I will be subject to all SCSEP rules and regulations.
- I understand that there is a 48-month lifetime durational limit to participation in SCSEP, and that only *National program* participants with significant needs may be considered for a one-time, 12-month, extension.
- I have read and agreed to follow the SCSEP Grievance Procedures.

I understand that violation of any of the above may result in disciplinary action, including termination from the SCSEP.

Additions or exceptions to above:

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SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## NATIONAL ABLE NETWORK, INC.

National Able Network is a nonprofit organization working to serve individuals, families, and communities by bringing together qualified job seekers and businesses. Since its founding in 1977 through a grant from The Chicago Community Trust, Able's experienced, multicultural professionals have provided training, personal skills, and job-search techniques that help people enter or re-enter the workforce as quickly and as easily as possible. Our mission is clear:

**Preparing Today's Communities to Meet Tomorrow's Challenges  
through Education, Employment, and Opportunity**

For more information, please visit our website:

**[www.nationalable.org](http://www.nationalable.org)** or call our toll-free number 855.994.8300.



*The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) of Illinois is funded by a U.S. Department of Labor grant administered by the Illinois Department on Aging. Services are provided locally by National Able Network. We follow the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity in all aspects of employment, including recruitment and hiring, compensation, benefits, training, promotion, discipline, and all other terms and conditions of employment. It is the intent of Able to follow the letter and spirit of local, state, and federal laws governing Equal Employment Opportunity. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*