



Legislative Alert

In this issue:

ACTION NEEDED: Contact your U.S. Representative to let him/her know the impact of a funding cut in SCSEP. Ask your Representative to keep SCSEP funding intact and vote NO to the \$34.4 million cut.

June 24, 2016

Earlier this month, **the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee** cleared the federal fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations package for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and related agencies. The appropriations package includes a **\$34.4 million (8%) cut in the Older Americans Act Title V – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**.

For the past several years, SCSEP was funded at just over \$434 million, of which Wisconsin received almost \$11 million (program year 2014-15). SCSEP is the oldest (created in 1965) and largest federally-funded program for low-income older adults who seek employment and training assistance, as well as civic engagement. This transitional employment program partners with community-based non-profit organizations and government agencies (host agencies) to provide participants with training opportunities to update their skills. The program:

- Serves over 60,000 seniors annually (Wisconsin SCSEP served 1,721 seniors in program year 2014-15);
- Provides over 40 million community service hours to public and non-profit agencies (Wisconsin SCSEP participants provided 941,889 hours of community service in program year 2014-15);
- Creates opportunities for participants to build skills and self-confidence while earning a modest income (minimum wage) as they work an average of 20 hours; and
- Serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants (over 191 Wisconsin SCSEP participants were placed into permanent employment in program year 2014-15).

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), **funding has not kept pace with the growing numbers or needs of older adults**. Last year, over 67,000 seniors participated in SCSEP, but that represents less than 1% of those who are eligible. According to a recent National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD) report, a survey of participants in long-term service and support programs revealed 20% of seniors and people with disabilities indicated interest in being employed, yet only 2% of the surveyed population reported having employment. The report further indicated **25% of seniors without jobs who enrolled in aging Medicaid programs and 16% of seniors without jobs receiving Older Americans Act services indicated a desire to be employed**.¹

The House Appropriations Subcommittee has not yet taken action, but is likely to do so very soon. Concerns have been raised about other funding pressures and priorities expressed by House appropriators. Your involvement is needed to ensure House appropriators reject the cuts proposed by the Senate. **IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED: Contact your U.S. Representative** (click on your Representative's name to link directly to a "contact" button) **to educate him/her on the importance of SCSEP funding to older Wisconsinites.** Wisconsin does not have any Representatives on the House Appropriations Committee; however, contacts are still important. **Encourage your Representative to reach out to their colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and ask them to reject the Senate's proposal to cut funding and to keep SCSEP funding intact.**

¹<http://www.nasuad.org/sites/nasuad/files/NCI-AD%202015-2016%20Six%20State%20Mid-Year%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

Janet L. Zander, CSW, MPA

Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator

715-677-6723 (Home office); 608-228-7253 (Cell); Janet.Zander@gwaar.org



Madison Office:

1414 MacArthur Rd, Suite A
Madison, WI 53714
ph. 608.243.5670
fax. 866.813.0974

Brookfield Office:

125 N. Executive Drive, Suite 207
Brookfield, WI 53005

Green Bay Office:

2900 Curry Lane, Suite 414
Green Bay, WI 54311

gwaar.org