

August 24, 2017

**Your help is needed!**

The President's 2018 federal budget eliminates all funding for the Older American Act Title V - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Though the House Appropriations Committee Labor - Health and Human Services (HHS) bill for FY 2018 does not eliminate all funding, it moves the program from the Department of Labor (DOL) to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) – a move which is supported by aging advocates - and in the process **cuts funding for the program by 25% (\$100 million)**. SCSEP funding, which was already cut by nearly 8% in FY 2017, provides low-income older adults who are unemployed an opportunity to serve their community through part-time subsidized employment. SCSEP uses training and subsidized employment opportunities to prepare older workers for unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP is the only federal training program focused exclusively on helping older Americans return to the workforce. 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 65,000 older workers (annually) representing all states; Wisconsin SCSEP grantees serve over 1,700 older adults per year.
- Provides millions of community service hours to public and non-profit agencies across the country; Wisconsin SCSEP participants provide approximately 940,000 hours of community service each year.
- 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.
- Serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants. Over 170 Wisconsin SCSEP participants were placed into permanent employment in the most recently completed program year, including these success stories shared by Wisconsin grantees:

Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc., Neenah

“A participant placed at the Fond du Lac Job Center obtained (unsubsidized) employment at the Sheboygan Job Center, proving that placing individuals at a community service assignment can lead to employment. Another unique situation occurred when a participant was given notice that their durational limit was approaching. The host agency, Habitat for Humanity, created a position to hire the participant. Host agencies are proof that they are not only a viable work learning site, but support the hiring of older workers.”

**ACTION NEEDED:**

***1.) Ask U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin & Ron Johnson to reject/speak out against including the SCSEP funding cuts in the Senate Labor – HHS bill.***

***2.) Ask your U.S. Representative to support any efforts to increase SCSEP funding in the final House bill.***

Greater Wisconsin Area Agency on Aging Resources, Inc., Green Bay

“A partnership was created with Goodwill Corporate office and a unique training position was created for a participant who was in the process of completing his Master’s Degree. The participant received valuable training and built additional experience on his resume resulting in unsubsidized employment.”

Interfaith Older Adult Programs, Inc.

“A 60 year-old participant who is disabled spent...six months working at a food pantry. At the pantry, he learned warehouse skills such as organization, ensuring quality of products, safe practices in handling and lifting, and good customer service. The participant went above and beyond, learning more tasks than was expected, such as how to use a pallet jack so he could list this on his resume. As a result, the participant obtained unsubsidized employment at Amazon where he now has full benefits, paid time off and a substantial living wage. When the participant met with the program coordinator he stated he couldn’t have done it without the support and training received through the Wisconsin Senior Employment Program (WISE) Program and without the support of the host agency supervisor at the food pantry who was outstanding. The host agency supervisor was encouraging and wanted him to excel and learn as much as possible.”

Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc.

“A 64 year-old woman had been enrolled in the WISE Program for three and half years. Prior to enrolling in WISE, she worked as a security guard and needed to find a different line of work. She was placed at the Rock County Job Center learning to be a custodian. She attended several trainings for computer and cleaning techniques. This helped her to gain the skills and knowledge needed to become a custodian. She was hired as a part-time custodian at the Job Center and at Peterson Cleaning Service. She now works 40 hours per week and is happy. She has been able to get a new apartment and a vehicle. The best part is that she is economically self-sufficient.”

House and Senate Appropriators are expected to consider funding bills when they return to Washington, D.C. after the Labor Day recess. Members of Congress are in-district for approximately two more weeks! **If you do not want these valuable services to be further reduced by funding cuts...**

- 1.) **Contact [U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin](#) who is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and ask her to ensure cuts to SCSEP are not included in the Senate Labor – HHS bill.**
- 2.) **Contact [U.S. Senator Ron Johnson](#) and encourage him to reach out to his colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee to ask them to reject any cuts in SCSEP funding.**

Ultimately both the House and Senate will need to pass identical funding bills, so also...

- 3.) **Contact your U.S. Representative and ask him/her to support any efforts to increase SHIP funding in a *final* House Labor – HHS bill.**

To find your U.S. Representative, go to: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) (enter your zip code in the white box in the upper right-hand corner under FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVE). For additional details about the WISE program see the [WISE Program](#) information on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website. For contact information for your federal legislators, check out [Wisconsin Members of Congress](#).