

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

(OMB Control Number: 1225-0086)

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to States (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported quarterly on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

(a) How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG; Veterans and eligible persons receive employment, training, and job placement services at JSM offices. Veterans and eligible spouses (or covered persons), who receive priority of service, are required to complete a Veteran triage form prior to referral to Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff in a JSM office. The triage form is located at the front counter at all JSM offices. Staff have been trained to request completion of the Triage form to determine eligibility prior to referral to the DVOP. Veterans and eligible spouses (or covered persons) will receive priority of service over non-veterans when it comes to receiving employment, training, and job placement services.

DVOP staff are located in JSM offices. All customers entering these locations will be screened for Veteran status and DVOP eligibility.

DVOP staff are expected to provide intensive case management services for SBE Veterans to include VR&E enrolled Veterans. This includes a comprehensive assessment and individual employment plan based upon the employment plan provided by the VA for the VR&E Veterans. The goal is to provide veterans and eligible persons with the tools to be successful in the job search. DVOP staff will work one on one with eligible veterans and assist with resume writing and review, interview concepts and skills and job searching techniques. DVOP staff will provide consistent contact" per VPL 02-21 and GO Memo 03-21 as the third component of case management.

LVER staff will promote the advantages of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups. LVER staff will advocate for all veterans served by the

JSM with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in appropriate activities such as:

- Planning and participating in job or career fairs;
- Conducting employer outreach;
- In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups;
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;
- Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;
- Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

MTDLI's business engagement team will also promote advantages of hiring veterans as they conduct employer outreach activities. This team serves all regions across the state and has connections to economic development groups, local chambers, and industry organizations, and can serve as an additional statewide resource to the JVSG program.

(b) The duties assigned to DVOP specialists and LVER staff by the State; specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and 4104. These duties must be consistent with current guidance; DVOPs are charged with providing case management and individualized careers services to young veterans aged 18-24, eligible spouses, and veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBEs) as outlined in Veterans Program Letter most current guidance, which include:

- A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(1) and (3); special disabled and disabled veterans are those who:
 - are entitled to compensation (or who, but for the receipt of military retired pay, would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; or
 - were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability;
- A homeless person, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. I 1302(a) and (b)), as amended;
- A recently separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months;
- An offender, as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration;
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; or
- A low-income individual (as defined by WIOA Section 3 (36).
- Veterans aged 18-24.
- Vietnam Era veteran is an eligible veteran any part of whose active military, naval, or air service was during the Vietnam era from Feb 28, 1961, t May 7, 1975, for service in Vietnam or Aug 5, 1964, to May 7, 1975, for service outside of Vietnam.
- Eligible Transitioning service members, spouses, and caregivers.

DVOPs provide a range of services including career planning and counseling and comprehensive outreach to locate veterans in need of intensive services:

- Comprehensive Assessment, including a documented plan of service (IEP);
- Counseling and career/vocational guidance;
- Referral of veterans to supportive or remedial services;
- Promoting Vocational Rehab and WIOA services;
- Referral of veterans to job focused and outcome-driven training or certification;
- Job development;
- Development of VA-funded Special Incentive and OJT;
- Review all open case files of current participants with an SBE in a priority category and perform case management duties; and
- Referral of veterans to employment opportunities.

LVER staff advocate for all veterans, served by JSM, with business, industry and other community-based organizations by participating in appropriate activities such as career services. These services include but are not limited to:

- Planning and participation in job and career fairs meeting with employers;
- Conducting employer outreach;
- Collaborating with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing search groups;
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs, and business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;
- Informing Federal contractors and sub-contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;
- Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and
- Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

(c) The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State's employment service delivery system or American Job Center; JVSG programs, are administered by MTDLI and are co-located with, integrated into, and managed by JSM. JVSG funds 6.0 FTE including:

- Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialists (DVOP);
- A Veteran Intensive Service Coordinator who also serves as the program manager and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER).

Customers entering JSM offices are screened for eligibility and referred to JVSG staff as appropriate. In most cases, JVSG clients are co-enrolled in Title I-B programs.

LVER staff work closely with JSM Business Services teams to promote the hiring of veterans by private and public employers. During these outreach visits, the LVER and the Business Services teams inform their audiences about MTDLI services, including LVER and DVOP services. Business Services teams collaborate with the LVER to raise employer awareness of the JVSG program, and the services provided by a DVOP

specialist and LVER. All JSM partners receive frequent training on DVOP and LVER services.

(d) The Incentive Award program implemented using the 1% grant allocation set aside for this purpose, as applicable; The Performance Incentive Award Program are operated in accordance with VPL 01-22. The incentive awards encourage JVSG-funded staff and JSM offices to strive for excellence and encourage retention of quality staff.

The total amount of funds available for Performance Incentive Awards will total one percent of the total JVSG awarded to the state. The awards will be presented in cash, with the higher amounts going to those who achieve excellence. The number of nominations for office and individual awards varies each year as does the total incentive amount. The amount will be determined by the number of nominations, rewarding those scoring the highest the most money. Individual Awards Tier 1 Top 2 share 50% of the awarded individual amount, Tier 2 shares the rest equally.

Recipients of Performance Incentive Awards can be individuals or a team; i.e., local office. The performance awards will be presented during the last quarter of the federal fiscal year. A detailed report of the performance award-obligated funds will be provided with the fourth quarter report.

To be considered for a Performance Incentive Award staff and offices must be nominated based on accomplishments, efforts to build veteran coalitions and fast-track veteran training and employment options. The award process is open to all JSM employees who serve veterans and our non-federal partners based on ICS rates. Non-federal partners include:

- Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists;
- Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff;
- Individuals providing employment, training, and placement services to veterans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including labor exchanges funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act; and an employment service team or office.

The plan does not include the amount each recipient will receive. Offices and individuals who have been nominated will be scored in the categories described above on a scale of 1 to 5 for each category and whether their efforts are innovative, valuable, and measurable.

The Montana State Veteran Coordinator within the DO Bureau will administer the funds and all the funds will be presented in cash awards. The award amount will be dependent on the number of nominations for both individual and team awards. All awards will be based on performance or activities that occurred during the program year for which the award is given. In accordance with VPL 01-22, incentive award funds will be obligated by September 30 and expended by December 31 of each FY.

(e) The populations of eligible veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the Secretary as eligible for services, and any additional

populations specifically targeted by the State Workforce Agency for services from one-stop delivery system partners (e.g., Native American veterans; veterans in remote rural counties or parishes);

Veterans are an important part of the Montana workforce, with over 50,000 veterans employed. Montana has the 2nd highest rate of veterans among states, but the labor force participation rate of Montana veterans is lower than the national average. Roughly 30% of Montanan's veterans have a disability, which contributes to lower-than-average labor force participation rates.

DVOPs are charged with providing case management and individualized careers services to eligible veterans, spouses, and veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBEs) as outlined in Veterans Program Letter (VPL) 03-19, which include:

- A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(1) and (3); special disabled and disabled veterans are those who:
 - are entitled to compensation (or who, but for the receipt of military retired pay, would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; or,
 - were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability;
- A homeless person, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. I 1302(a) and (b)), as amended;
- A recently separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months;
- An offender, as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration;
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; or
- A low-income individual (as defined by WIOA Section 3 (36)).
- Veterans aged 18-24
- Vietnam-era veterans
- Eligible Transitioning Service Members, Spouses, and Caregivers.

(f) How the State implements and monitors the administration of priority of service to covered persons;

The description of how the state implements and monitors priority of service to covered persons is included in the Common Elements of the WIOA State Plan.

(g) How the State provides or intends to provide and measure, through both the DVOP and American Job Center staff:

(1) job and job training individualized career services

Per Veteran Program Letter (VPL) 01-22, a response to this section is not required

(2) employment placement services, and

Per Veteran Program Letter (VPL) 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

(3) job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons;
Per Veteran Program Letter (VPL) 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

(h) The hire date along with mandatory training completion dates for all DVOP specialists and LVER staff;
Per Veteran Program Letter (VPL) 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

(i) Such additional information as the Secretary may require.

	JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS PROGRAM	
	PROGRAM YEAR: 2024	PROGRAM YEAR: 2025
	EXPECTED LEVEL	EXPECTED LEVEL
EMPLOYMENT (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)	55.0%	55.0%
EMPLOYMENT (FOURTH QUARTER AFTER EXIT)	52.5%	52.5%
MEDIAN EARNINGS (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)	\$6,250	\$6,250

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

(a) Economic Projections and Impact

(1) Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d))(May alternatively be discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan.)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Quarterly Workforce Indicators for data ending data ending 2023Q1, healthcare and social assistance sectors are the primary employer for those 55 and above in Montana, followed by retail, accommodations, and food services. The healthcare also shows anticipated annual growth of over 820 new jobs until 2032, (Montana Employment Projections, 2022 to 2032). Professions such as nursing, medical and dental

assistance, pharmacy technicians, and home health and personal care aides rank among Montana's top job openings and workforce requirements over the past decade and continuing into the foreseeable future. While these roles are suitable for older workers, certain physical strength prerequisites for home health and personal care aides might pose challenges for some individuals.

Jobs in the retail trade industry offer distinct advantages for older workers seeking part-time employment while maintaining a semi-retired lifestyle. The retail trade industry is poised to be among the top five sectors in terms of job growth, with an estimated 500 new jobs annually from 2022 to 2032. Within this industry, the sales and related occupation group is the third highest occupation group by anticipated demand, with an expected 7,990 job openings each year through 2032. This employment landscape provides an opportunity for older individuals to participate in the workforce while enjoying the flexibility offered by part-time roles.

(2) Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

Considering the workforce needs and the suitability of various roles for an aging demographic, the healthcare industry emerges as a focal point for all workforce programs, including SCSEP. Nursing roles encompass positions ranging from lower-skilled nursing assistants to mid-skill Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and high-skill Registered Nurses (RNs), to Advanced Practiced Registered Nurses (APRNs). Demand for these roles is statewide, making nursing occupations an ideal focus for training older workers deeply rooted in their communities. The top five healthcare occupations, showcasing anticipated annual job openings through 2032 are:

- 1) Home Health & Personal Care Aides (annual job openings 1,950)
- 2) Nursing Assistants (annual job openings 750)
- 3) Registered Nurses (annual job openings 640)
- 4) Medical Assistants (annual job openings 300)
- 5) Dental Assistants (annual job openings 220)

Source: Montana Department of Labor and Industry Employment Projections. 2022-2032.

SCSEP participants with different interests can find meaningful engagement in the expansive healthcare industry, given its array of occupations with distinct skill requirements. Non-healthcare roles within this sector include positions such as general and operations managers (960 annual openings), medical secretaries (580 annual openings), and childcare workers (540 annual openings).

The top five non-healthcare jobs in the Healthcare Industry and annual openings, 2022-2032:

- 1) General and Operations Managers
- 2) Medical Secretaries & Administrative Assistants
- 3) Childcare Workers
- 4) Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria (390 annual openings)
- 5) Medial and Health Services Managers (280 annual openings)

Source: Montana Department of Labor and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032.

Retail remains an ideal industry for older workers demonstrating high demand for sales positions, with retail salespersons leading the way with 2,570 annual openings. followed closely by cashiers with 2,240 annual openings, and first-line supervisors of retail sales workers with 830 annual openings. Opportunities in the retail trade industry exist in virtually all communities across Montana.

Top 5 Sales Jobs with annual job openings, 2022-2032 are:

- 1) Retail Salespersons
- 2) Cashiers
- 3) First Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workforce
- 4) Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Expect technical and scientific products (540 annual openings)
- 5) Insurance Sales Agents (260 annual openings)

Source: Montana Department of Labor and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032.

Enrollees in the SCSEP program undergo evaluations of their previous work experience and current skill sets. Following this assessment, they enroll in customized training programs designed to bolster individual capabilities and align with the dynamic demands of either the healthcare and non-healthcare industry or the retail trade industry.

(3)Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR641.325(c))

As outlined in sections a.1 and a.2, the healthcare and retail trade industries are the focal points for SCSEP participants. These sectors exhibit substantial workforce needs. While many key healthcare occupations necessitate some post-secondary education below the

bachelor's degree level, rendering them suitable for short-term training, opportunities in the retail trade industry typically have lower educational requirements. The demand within both industries spans across all regions of Montana. Targeting these sectors ensures opportunities for workers from diverse backgrounds and education levels. Depending on the individual's background and skills, SCSEP candidates can swiftly undergo re-skilling to align with the requirements of various occupations within these two industries.

(4) Service Delivery and Coordination

- a. A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

- i. **Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA One-Stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))**

Coordination of SCSEP activities with WIOA Title I programs is essential in ensuring older workers receive services needed to obtain meaningful community service activities that lead to unsubsidized employment. In Montana this is accomplished through (1) engagement in Community Management Teams (CMT) made up of core and community-based partners located across the state; and (2) through coordination of services in the One-Stop system.

The SCSEP subgrantee, Easterseals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain (ESGW NRM) refers all participants to Wagner-Peyser for job search assistance, client registration, and assessment. Once a client intake is complete, the client may then be referred to other WIOA Title I programs and partner programs for co-enrollment as appropriate. ESGW NRM partners with AJCs and other entities who serve as host agencies for SCSEP participants. ESGW NRM is also working with several economic development entities across the state to collaborate and leverage resources for the best outcomes for SCSEP participants and to avoid duplication of services. Working and coordinating with partners ensure training and employment strategies are based on local markets and relevant to SCSEP participants. ESGW NRM also has a dedicated recruiter.

- (B) **Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))**

Montana's SCSEP grantee, through a contract with the State SCSEP subgrantee ESGW NRM, partners with and administers some of the following programs under OAA:

- a) AARP
- b) Adult Protective Services Transportation Advisory Councils
- c) Community-based health centers
- d) Community-based transportation providers
- e) Montana's Area Agencies on Aging
- f) Montana Department of Labor & Industry Programs
- g) Montana Independent Living Centers
- h) Private non-profit agencies providing employment services
- i) Veteran service providers
- j) County Extension offices
- k) Community-based organizations, including:
 - 1) Easterseals Goodwill (ESGW)
 - 2) Good Samaritan
 - 3) St. Vincent DePaul
 - 4) Salvation Army Ministries
 - 5) Rocky Mountain Development Council
 - 6) Human Resource Development Council
 - 7) Habitat for Humanity
 - 8) Local food banks
- l) Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services
- m) Montana's Native American tribes

Montana's SCSEP coordinates activities with the groups listed above by partnering, attending conferences and job fairs, and coordinating education opportunities about SCSEP. AJCs and many of the community-based organizations also serve as host agencies for training of SCSEP participants. The SCSEP grantee will continue to coordinate services across partner programs and seek additional opportunities to expand partnerships. Activities and coordination of services across partners, include, but aren't limited to:

- a) Job fairs;
- b) Conferences;
- c) Participation in community-based boards or councils designed to coordinate services across common populations, including seniors;
- d) Economic development boards or groups, like local Chambers of Commerce or other business groups.

(C) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))

Montana's SCSEP coordinates with partner agencies that focus on serving individuals with disabilities throughout the state. Partner agencies and programs include, but are not limited to:

- a) Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services administered through Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Services;
- b) Montana's Independent Living Project;
- c) Businesses and host agencies engaged in employment and training for participants; and
- d) Other workforce programs administered throughout the state;

Montana's SCSEP grantee works with community-based organizations throughout the state to best serve individuals' specific needs and location.

(D) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.3020))

SCSEP has not participated in planning processes to apply for DOL-funded industry training initiatives; however, the ESGW participates at the local and community level across the state as a part of the Community Management Team, and through economic development collaborations within regions throughout the state. ESGW has SCSEP offices located in Great Falls, Missoula, Kalispell, and Billings. Due to Montana's geographic size and industry mix, the Employment Specialists in the region work collaboratively with area partners to identify industry sectors, workforce development opportunities and needs within the region. This enables SCSEP to work within the groups to ensure training opportunities are appropriate and available to prepare older participants for employment.

(E) Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the One-Stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the One-Stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)

To facilitate coordination through the One-Stop system, Montana SCSEP participates at the community level by participating in Community Management Teams and other community-based workforce initiatives. The grantee's participation ensures older workers are afforded the same opportunities as any other subgroup receiving services through workforce programs.

(F) Efforts to with local economic development offices in rural

locations

Montana SCSEP works with the Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC). MBAC, anchored in Helena, is an economic development entity serving several Montana counties assists the subgrantee by sharing SCSEP opportunities with other businesses and community partners.

To ensure the program has a community presence, staff work with community-based partners outside the One-Stop system including public libraries, other social service agencies and private businesses.

(G) Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Montana SCSEP collaborates with economic development offices throughout the state to educate economic development entities about the benefits of employing older workers. In addition, economic development staff are represented on many Community Management Teams across the state.

b. The State's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (May alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of strategic plan.)

Montana SCSEP coordinates with the state's One-Stop System bringing awareness of the program to demonstrate the benefits of hiring older workers. Due to the success of working with our One-Stop system and placements of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment across the state. Montana SCSEP will continue this practice.

c. The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))

Montana's SCSEP mission in providing services to minorities includes serving ethnic minorities, immigrants, and refugees. At a minimum, the state's goal is to serve minority populations in the same proportion as their presence in the eligible population currently served. The analysis of the Program Year 2021 (PY21) minority report indicates that the overall service to the minority population of participants served by Montana SCSEP level was 22%, compared to the census percentage of 13.5% and the total percent difference was 163%- well above the standard of 80%.

The grantee receives the annual minority report of Montana's minority population from the USDOL. Montana uses this report to determine the best plan for serving minority populations across the state, if the program is underserving minority populations.

Montana SCSEP actively recruits minority participants through direct outreach to minority churches, organizations, community-based agencies who serve minority populations, and multi-cultural populations. SCSEP staff also conducts guest lectures and workshops to help inform, connect and recruit participants and employers. In addition, SCSEP advertises in

local newspapers, including tribal newspapers, and senior publications to promote the benefits of this program.

Montana SCSEP directly serves clients on reservations in Bighorn and Lake counties and is active on the remaining five reservations to ensure services are available to potential program participants.

The long-term strategy for increasing services and outcomes for minority populations is to build on current relationships with community-based partners, who trust the program and can speak to the benefits of participating. Montana SCSEP identifies where services to minorities are most needed through an analysis of the need for services in any areas where there are noted disparities.

- d. A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)**

Between Montana's state and national grantees, SCSEP serves 49 of the 56 counties across the state. ESGW notes that the communities that most need the SCSEP program are the most challenging to serve. These rural communities are often extremely isolated with limited commerce, lack community service assignments that align with capabilities of our seniors, which translates to, little to no employment opportunities. Most Montana counties fall under the hard-to-serve designation for both the national and state SCSEP grantees.

Statewide there is more demand for SCSEP services than the current grantee has the capacity to provide. Low population densities and large distances between clients in hard-to-serve, remote counties makes service delivery particularly challenging.

Senior populations that benefit from community service work are those with time and energy, seniors over 65, ex-convicts, retired people (especially farmers and ranchers), all age groups if capable of physical work, the unemployed, and economically disadvantaged older persons.

Common local community service needs in Montana include:

- a) Janitors, cooks, librarians, teacher aides, or mentoring in schools
- b) prison roles
- c) tourism
- d) landscaping along streets or in parks
- e) office support services for nonprofits and government offices
- f) Making signs
- g) Career development
- h) Advising local businesses
- i) Cleaning rest areas
- j) After-school programs and childcare
- k) Gift-shop attendants
- l) Service attendants for food pantries and clothing give-away programs

e. The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))

Montana SCSEP focuses on serving eligible clients by providing training opportunities to improve or build skill levels for jobs available in communities. The long-term program goal is to assure job retention. This occurs when job matching is appropriate for both the employer and older worker and results in the betterment of the state's economy.

To ensure participants obtain the skills necessary to compete in the modern workforce, SCSEP staff:

- a) help SCSEP participants attain skills that will fill the employment needs of the state;
- b) work with nonprofit agencies to provide meaningful community service assignments to fill community needs;
- c) reach out to previously untapped agencies to engage them in SCSEP;
- d) assist the business community in finding ways to attract and employ the older worker;
- e) educate businesses about the value of hiring older workers by providing professional marketing materials to educate and engage host agencies and employers;
- f) continue to coordinate with Montana's One-Stop system;
- g) braid services to American Indians by working more closely with WIOA 166 grantees;
- h) expand Area Agencies on Aging referrals;
- i) develop and sustain partnerships with groups that advocate and provide services to people with disabilities, minority populations, and veterans;
- j) expand coordination with the state's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC program); and
- k) expand business relationships with Montana Chambers of Commerce.

6. The State's strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(t))

Montana SCSEP has developed the following strategies for continuous improvement for successful employment placements of participants:

- a) Directing job placements specific to the areas where the participant resides. SCSEP has been successful in placing participants in unsubsidized employment with community service agencies and host agency training sites. A significant portion of SCSEP's unsubsidized placement occurs when the community service training site hires SCSEP participants who trained on-site.
- b) Identifying current and future regional job
- c) opportunities, local employment trends and job openings;
- d) Partnering with Montana's One-Stop system
- e) Tracking labor market information
- f) Establishing Workforce Partnerships to continue awareness building. SCSEP staff have established relationships with the following workforce partners:
 - a. Job Service, which administers WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, the Wagner-Peyser program,;
 - b. Vocational Rehabilitation Services;
 - c. Adult Services and Aging programs;
 - d. Adult Education programs; and
 - e. Local economic development and business associations.
- b) Upgrading and maintaining participant skillset; and
- c) Ongoing assessment of skills

SCSEP participants are assessed utilizing a variety of tools, some through the American Job Centers, as well as through consultation with their Employment Specialist. An Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is created with the participant and based on the IEP the participant may receive job readiness skills to prepare them for an assignment or placed directly on an assignment with a host agency.

Training on-line through GFCGlobal.org is available to those that have internet/computer access at home or in ESGW offices. Many participants take advantage of this training as it can be done at any time from any computer. Each potential applicant is assessed to determine their interests and current skill level. Participants are assessed for their physical abilities and offered a general physical to ensure participants are trained and placed in appropriate employment settings. Assessment is ongoing for participants based on their IEP, which may be revised as needed throughout their participation in the program.

SCSEP expands and reinforces partnerships with the business community to gather input on workforce needs. SCSEP works closely with business partners to ensure participants are adequately trained to meet the job requirements before placement. Input from the business community enables Montana SCSEP and the workforce community to provide more meaningful training opportunities for older workers and find opportunities for unsubsidized job placement with a higher degree of retention.

In addition to strategies for continuous improvement listed above, ESGW provides quarterly reports to the state SCSEP grantee who may offer technical assistance in areas needing improvement.

c. Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

(1) A description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))

ESGW serves clients statewide, and Montana is geographically large and rural state which creates service delivery challenges. Montana SCSEP works with partners to address these obstacles. These partners include:

- 1) AARP
- 2) Adult Protective Services Transportation Advisory Councils;
- 3) Community-based health centers;
- 4) Community-based transportation providers;
- 5) Montana's Area Agencies on Aging;
- 6) Montana Department of Labor & Industry Programs;
- 7) Montana Independent Living Centers;
- 8) Private non-profit agencies providing employment services;
- 9) Veteran service providers;
- 10) County Extension offices;

Community-based organizations, including:

- a) Easterseals-Goodwill;
 - b) Good Samaritan;
 - c) St. Vincent DePaul;
 - d) Salvation Army Ministries;
 - e) Rocky Mountain Development Council;
 - f) Human Resource Development Council;
 - g) Habitat for Humanity;
 - h) Local food banks; and
 - i) A relationship with state-wide correctional facilities and Probation and Parole offices has also been established to recruit more participants in need.
- 11) Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services; and
 - 12) Montana's Native American tribes.

Service delivery in Custer, Fallon, Fergus, Jefferson and Judith Basin counties are more challenging due to the remote location or limited economic opportunities. In contrast, the most populated areas such as Missoula, Gallatin, and Yellowstone counties have majority of hard-to-serve seniors.

The state collects, monitors, and analyzes community service needs throughout the state on an ongoing basis. ESGW uses information collected by the state, including labor market information, economic reports, and other information provided through the state of Montana’s Data and Operations Bureau to understand the state’s workforce and economic picture and target training and outreach based on data provided.

(2) List the cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

County	Cities	PY'22 State Grantee AP	PY'22 National Grantee AP	PY'23 State Grantee AP	PY'23 National Grantee AP
Beaverhead	Dillon	0	2	0	2
Big Horn	Pryor, Harden, Lodge Grass	2	0	2	1
Blaine	Chinook	0	2	0	2
Broadwater	Townsend	0	2	0	2
Carbon	Red Lodge	0	3	0	3
Carter		0	0	0	0
Cascade	Great Falls, Cascade, Belt	5	13	5	13
Chouteau	Fort Benton	0	2	0	2
Custer	Miles City, Lame Deer, Ashland	1	2	1	2
Daniels		0	1	0	1
Dawson	Glendive	0	1	0	1
Deer Lodge	Anaconda	0	4	0	4

Fallon		0	1	0	1
Fergus	Lewistown	0	3	0	3
Flathead	Kalispell, Whitefish, West Glacier, Big Fork, Coram	8	14	8	14
Gallatin	Bozeman, Belgrade	4	8	4	8
Garfield		0	0	0	0
Glacier	Cut Bank, Browning	0	6	0	6
Golden Valley		0	0	0	0
Granite		0	1	0	1
Hill	Havre	0	3	0	3
Jefferson	Boulder	0	2	0	2
Judith Basin		0	1	0	1
Lake	Polson, Elmo, Ronan, Pablo	5	4	5	4
Lewis and Clark	Helena, East Helena, Augusta, Lincoln	6	6	6	8
Liberty		0	0	0	0
Lincoln	Libby	0	10	0	10
Madison	Virginia City	0	3	0	3
McCone		0	1	0	1
Meagher	White Sulphur Springs	0	1	0	1
Mineral	Superior	0	2	0	2
Missoula	Missoula, East Missoula, Frenchtown	7	14	7	14
Musselshell	Roundup	0	2	0	2
Park	Livingston	0	5	0	5
Petroleum		0	0	0	0
Phillips	Malta	0	2	0	2

Pondera	Conrad	0	2	0	2
Powder River	Broadus	0	1	0	1
Powell	Deer Lodge	0	1	0	1
Prairie	Terry	0	0	0	0
Ravalli	Hamilton, Stevensville, Corvallis, Darby	5	11	5	11
Richland	Sidney	0	3	0	3
Roosevelt	Wolf Point	0	3	0	3
Rosebud	Forsyth	0	3	0	3
Sanders	Thompson Falls	0	5	0	5
Sheridan	Plentywood	0	1	0	1
Silver Bow	Butte	0	11	0	11
Stillwater	Columbus	0	2	0	2
Sweet Grass	Big Timber	0	1	0	1
Teton	Chouteau	0	2	0	2
Toole	Shelby	0	2	0	2
Treasure		0	0	0	0
Valley	Glasgow	0	3	0	3
Wheatland	Harlowton	0	1	0	1
Wibaux	Wibaux	0	0	0	0
Yellowstone	Billings, Park City, Ballantine, Laurel	9	24	9	24
TOTAL AP		52	200	52	201

Counties not served by
State Grantee

Counties not served by
SCSEP

(3) Describe current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

Montana SCSEP relies on USDOL's data system, GPMS, for the number of authorized and modified positions available in the quarter, the current number of enrollments and terminations at the end of each quarter and the variance by county. MTDLI and the subgrantee use this website to manage the number of slots to assure equitable distribution of positions.

While Montana SCSEP counties were showing as underserved at the end of the PY'22 final quarter, state program participants exceeded the authorized position numbers of 6 enrollments. State SCSEP expects that the variances in these counties will decline or be eliminated now that the subgrantee is once again fully staffed and focused on recruitment. Montana SCSEP will continue to work toward equitable distribution for each county by focusing on: (1) recruitment in the currently underserved counties through increased coordination efforts with WIOA, Older Americans Act programs, private and public entities, and local economic development offices; and (2) training participants online- a practice the state began during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(4) The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

- i. (A) Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.

There have been no significant increases of eligible persons in any of Montana SCSEP counties. The common goal for the SCSEP grantee is to distribute the workers served by the program in accordance with the equitable distribution of positions per county.

The SCSEP grantee is consistently working toward equitable distribution in each county. There are no counties that are significantly over-served or under-served based on U. S. Census data. Under-enrollment in some counties may be due to the large, rural, sparsely populated areas that have a higher unemployment rate than the state's average unemployment rate. Over-enrollment in some counties likely relates to their urban makeup. The concentrated population in these counties generally leads to a push to enroll more participants because they provide the most opportunities for outreach to potential enrollees and employers.

- (B) Equitably serves rural and urban areas.

The national SCSEP grantee has authorized positions in forty-nine counties out of the total fifty-six counties in Montana. Ten of these counties also have state-designated positions.

Even with population shifts each year that cause some counties to be over-served and some to be under-served, the authorized numbers meet the Census figures.

(C) Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)

Montana state SCSEP priority for service is provided to eligible individuals who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- 1) Aged 65 years or older
- 2) Have a disability
- 3) Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills
- 4) Reside in a rural area
- 5) Are veterans or their spouses who meet the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act
- 6) Have low employment prospects
- 7) Have failed to find employment after using services provided though the One-Stop delivery system
- 8) Are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- 9) Was formerly incarcerated or under supervision from release from prison or jail within five (5) years of the date of initial eligibility determination.

Montana's SCSEP goal is to serve all of these populations in proportion to their percentage of the total population. Each applicant's eligibility is determined by an interview and documented on an intake form. Montana SCSEP Employment Specialists are trained to identify all participants' barriers that qualify as most in need.

The long-term strategy for increased services to these populations is through additional training, community-outreach, participation in job fairs or other community recruitment or education events, and increased partnerships with organizations serving any of the priority populations listed above.

State SCSEP policy was updated in 2021 by adding formerly incarcerated individuals to the priority for service list of eligible individuals based on guidance in TEGl 17-20. The priority allows the formerly incarcerated identified as having barriers to employment and are most-in-need an additional 12 months of participation under Montana's Individual Durational Limitation (IDL) policy.

Montana's SCSEP subgrantee educates community partners serving justice involved individuals about SCSEP and explains the potential for employment and training support. One goal for serving formerly incarcerated individuals is to meet with those who are nearing their release date to determine their eligibility for SCSEP so that the individual is ready to enter SCSEP upon release. The SCSEP data information system reported that 12% of Montana SCSEP participants served in the 2nd quarter of PY'23 were formerly incarcerated individuals.

(5) The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))

Montana uses the most current Equitable Distribution Report to reflect the number of eligible individuals in each county to the total eligible population in the state.

As of 2020, 53.4% of Montanans (579,177) resided in urban areas and 46.6% (505,048) in rural areas based on the US Census Bureau's recent updates to urban and rural definitions.

Montana had 22 areas defined as urban areas in the 2020 Census. These Census Urban Areas are generally cities, and occasionally consolidated city-counties. The Urban Areas are Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, Belgrade, Billings, Bozeman, Butte-Silver Bow, Columbia Falls, Dillon, Glendive, Great Falls, Hamilton, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Laurel, Lewistown, Libby, Livingston, Miles City, Missoula, Polson, Sidney, Whitefish.

Source: https://www2.census.gov/geo/docs/reference/ua/2020_Census_ua_st_list_all.xlsx

(6) The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

(A) Reside in urban and rural areas within the State

The SCSEP Equitable Distribution report is the primary means for providing the state with the data it needs to ensure all eligible populations and target groups are properly served. The formula outlines the service level to individuals residing in urban and rural areas within the state, those that have the greatest economic need, minorities, individuals with limited English proficiency, and those who have the greatest social need.

Montana is a geographically large state with ongoing challenges including:

- 1) Shortages of quality host agencies that can provide the training that matches the employment goals for participants.
- 2) Shortages of employers that have a presence in the rural areas that are seeking new employees in general.
- 3) The economy in some of the counties is depressed.
- 4) Public transportation is less likely to be available in rural communities.

(B) Have the greatest economic need

Currently close to 90% of Montana's SCSEP participants are living in poverty and many of them are finding it necessary to work to pay for necessities, including food, housing, healthcare, and transportation. Many SCSEP participants are below the age of 65 and may not receive Social Security benefits, therefore, they need to supplement their income through employment.

(C) Are minorities

In Montana, American Indians are the main minority population at 11% of the total participants. This minority population is underserved in SCSEP based on the eligible population. Montana has eight recognized tribal nations and seven reservations, three of which are in or near the most heavily populated counties. Montana SCSEP works with local agencies and representatives in areas on or near the reservations to target recruitment activities. The following are minority statistics of participants pulled from the PY'22 4th quarter end performance report: American Indian 11%, Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0%, Black or African American 6% Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin 6%. The SCSEP grantee is made aware of individuals who are new to communities and may need SCSEP training opportunities through professional networks and Montana's One-Stop system.

(D) Are limited English proficient

As of the PY'22 2nd quarter report 14% of participants served were those that are limited English proficient. The SCSEP grantee uses the same recruitment techniques for individuals who are limited English proficient as the recruitment of other most-in-need populations. Recruitment efforts include recruitment through the One-Stop system; advertisements; local organizations; and working closely with local community members of ethnic or cultural groups to identify limited-English speaking individuals.

(E) Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

Due to the rural nature of Montana, many individuals served under SCSEP qualify as having the greatest social need. Criteria includes participants with little or no employment history, no basic skills, no high school education or identified as a high school drop-out, English language deficient, disabled, homeless, or living in a socially or economically isolated area where there are limited employment opportunities.

There is currently no metric for social need outside of measuring individuals with disability. SCSEP's PY'22 2nd quarter show that 32% of enrolled participants had some form of disability with 6% of those individuals having a severe disability.

- a. A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))

Montana SCSEP ensures that individuals who want to work have the opportunity to work through SCSEP services. The US Department of Labor provides the position distribution factors based on current census data. The distribution factor is the formula for defining the equitable share of SCSEP positions for each county based on the proportion of income and age-eligible population by county annually. Montana SCSEP determine which counties are over or underserved and calculates the movement of positions in order to bring about equity. Montana's SCSEP grantees ensure there is minimal disruption to service delivery due to redistribution of funds. The equitable distribution report is submitted annually to US Department of Labor for approval.