

Oregon
Senior Community Service
Employment Program (SCSEP)
State Plan

July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2016

2014-2016 Update: November 24, 2014



Prepared by the State Unit on Aging
Under Title V of the Older Americans Act



JOHN A. KITZHABER, MD
Governor

November 24, 2014

Ms. Kimberly Vitelli
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., NW, Room S-4209
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Ms. Vitelli:

I authorize the Oregon Department of Human Services, Aging and People with Disabilities, State Unit on Aging to submit the 2014-2016 update for Oregon's Senior Community Service Employment Program 2012-2016 State Plan on behalf of the State of Oregon. This authority shall remain in effect until revoked by the Office of the Governor.

Sincerely,

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.
Governor

Overview and purpose of the State Plan

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work based training program for low-income workers age 55 and older. Participants in the program work an average of 20 hours per week in a community service activity where they receive minimum wage. The community service training SCSEP participants receive is not a job, but is intended to act as a bridge to unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP is authorized by the Older Americans Act, as amended in 2006, which allots 78 percent of total SCSEP funding to national grantees and 22 percent to state grantees. Two national grantees, Experience Works and Easter Seals, provide SCSEP in Oregon, in addition to the grant received by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) directly from the U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL). The Oregon DHS administers the state SCSEP grant and has contracted with Experience Works to provide SCSEP services.

The SCSEP State Plan for Program Years 2012-2015 was developed by the Oregon DHS, Aging and People with Disabilities Division. The plan is intended to foster short- and long-term coordination between the state and national SCSEP grantees and to facilitate the collaborative efforts of stakeholders to accomplish SCSEP's goals. Efforts were made to align this plan with the Oregon Workforce Investment Board's (OWIB) strategic plan which is calling for greater workforce program alignment and integration at the local level. The services provided to low-income workers age 55 and older are a critical component in helping all Oregonians who need and want to work enter into jobs.

Distribution of SCSEP positions in Oregon

According to the Portland State University Population Research Center, Oregon's total population in 2013 was 3,919,020. Oregonians 55 and older make up 1,120,425, or 28 percent, of the total population.

Between the three grantees operating in Oregon, the US DOL allotted a total of 643 authorized SCSEP participant slots for Program Year 2014. 176 of those positions are administered by Easter Seals. With respect to Experience Works, the combined total of Oregon slots between the national grant and as the state sub-grantee is 467.

A) Long-term strategy for achieving equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within Oregon

The US DOL releases an annual Equitable Distribution (ED) Report that calculates the proportion of income- and age-eligible population by county. That is multiplied by

the available SCSEP funds for the entire state, resulting in the number SCSEP positions authorized to be served in each county. Both the state and national grantees are required to participate in the preparation of the Equitable Distribution report.

1) Moves positions from over-served to underserved areas (641.365)

State and national grantees work collaboratively to identify areas of the state where over-enrollment or under-enrollment exists. The state SCSEP coordinator arranges a meeting or phone conference with the national grantees and mutual agreement is required before any positions may be exchanged. The existing placement of positions in each county is compared with the number shown in the ED Report to identify any areas of over- or under-enrollment in the state. Participants may not be terminated from the program because of the equitable distribution requirement, so grantees must rely on normal attrition to correct areas of over-enrollment. Oregon strives for equity, but ED can be challenging in rural counties and areas with recent increases in the number of eligible individuals. Where equity cannot be achieved, Oregon attempts to keep the actual position distribution within two positions above or below the equitable distribution goal.

Statutory requirements prohibited the US DOL from releasing an updated ED Report for Program Year 2011. Instead, grantees were advised to calculate ED within their states by applying a 25 percent reduction from the Program Year 2010 authorized position levels. All SCSEP grantees in Oregon meet and work collaboratively to achieve equitable distribution. Two Oregon counties, Sherman County and Gilliam County, have such sparse populations that no SCSEP positions are authorized in those areas.

2) Equitably serves rural and urban areas

The definition of Rural as outlined in statute at 20 CFR 641.140 is:

An area not designated as a metropolitan statistical area by the Census Bureau; segments within metropolitan counties identified by codes 4 through 10 in the Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) system; and RUCA codes 2 and 3 for census tracts that are larger than 400 square miles and have population density of less than 30 people per square mile.

Approximately 17 percent of Oregonians live in rural areas of the state.

Employment opportunities and community resources are often more difficult to obtain in rural counties than in metropolitan areas. According to the Program Year 2013 Quarterly Progress Report (QPR), 75 of the 156 participants served by Oregon's state SCSEP grant during Program Year 2013 lived in areas

identified as rural. Experience Works has offices in 10 rural counties that provide direct services. Additionally, staff travels to eight other rural counties as often as needed to meet with participants and host agencies. Experience Works publicizes their statewide toll-free phone number so that applicants and partners may easily contact their state office, no matter where they live. The Experience Works web site also refers Oregon SCSEP applicants directly to the state office to streamline the application process.

Individuals living in urban areas have greater access to resources such as transportation, health services and educational opportunities than Oregonians living in less populated regions. Computer literacy has become increasingly important for SCSEP participants, as most employment opportunities now require basic computer skills at a minimum. All SCSEP participants are required to register with iMatch Skills, the state's computerized labor exchange system that matches employers with qualified candidates based on their skills and work experience.

Advances in technology continue to lower the cost of accessing the Internet, creating new opportunities for rural Oregonians that were not possible just a few years ago. Experience Works and Easter Seals offer computer literacy and higher-level computer skills training to SCSEP participants, which can help improve their employment prospects. Experience Works also uses a computerized system called JobReady that allows SCSEP participants to review their Individual Employment Plan (IEP) online any time they wish. SCSEP participants also use JobReady to complete online training courses at their own pace and earn Job Skill Certificates that can be presented to potential employers. SCSEP participants are also encouraged to access Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate via WorkSource Oregon, the state's one-stop workforce system.

3) Serves individuals afforded priority of service (641.520)

When recruiting and selecting participants for SCSEP, priority is given to individuals who have one or more of the following priority of service characteristics:

- a) Are covered persons in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act (covered persons – veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers – who are eligible for SCSEP must receive services instead of, or before, non-covered persons);
- b) Are 65 years or older;
- c) Have a disability;
- d) Have limited English proficiency;

- e) Have low literacy skills;
- f) Reside in a rural area;
- g) Have low employment prospects;
- h) Have failed to find employment after utilizing services provided through the One-Stop Delivery System;
- i) Are homeless or are at risk for homelessness

The priority of service requirements are included in the state SCSEP contract and are also followed by the national SCSEP grantees. Local project staff uses their connections with other programs, such as Veteran Representatives and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors at the One-Stops, to promote SCSEP and learn about individuals who may meet the priority of service and eligibility requirements. Grantees partner with organizations that serve hard to reach populations, such as those who are geographically or socially isolated and those whose primary language is not English. Those organizations include the Northwest Seasonal Worker Association and several federally-recognized tribes of Oregon.

Participants with the greatest economic need are provided supportive services, both direct and indirect. Direct services may include a gas card or a bus pass to accommodate transportation to and from their host agency assignment until they receive a paycheck. SCSEP staff utilizes county resource guides to identify supportive services, such as assistance with shelter, utilities, clothing and food, available through community resources. Many times those resources are provided at no cost to SCSEP or the participant.

Those with the greatest social needs are assigned to training sites able to provide a supportive environment. These sites may already serve clients facing similar barriers as the participants, providing a more comfortable environment for the SCSEP participant. The first training assignment for individuals with the greatest social need is limited in duration so SCSEP staff can monitor them closely and interact more often.

B) Steps to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible when positions are redistributed or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason.

The state SCSEP office hosts monthly conference calls with the sub-grantee staff to share important information related to the program. These calls provide a platform for local project staff to share information about successes and challenges in the areas they serve, and allow the state to share updates on performance measures, position distribution and other program requirements. Open communication between the field and state office is essential for the efficient operation of the program and enables both parties to respond quickly to changes in enrollment levels.

When over-enrollment occurs, SCSEP acts on the guidance of the US DOL to bring enrollment back to a manageable level. The strategies recommended by the US

DOL to manage over-enrollment include stopping new enrollments and reducing hours for current participants. Due to fluctuations in funding and increased demand during the economic downturn, the Oregon SCSEP experienced significant over-enrollment during Program Year 2011. Oregon relied on the strategies put forth by US DOL to reduce the number of SCSEP participants in Oregon's SCSEP program and reached the desired enrollment level by the end of the program year.

C) Long-term strategy for serving minority individuals

The Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals for Program Year 2012 conducted by The Charter Oak Group concluded that Oregon's SCSEP service to minority individuals was lower than the proportion of older minority adults in Oregon's population. During Program Year 2012, 12.2% of the SCSEP participants enrolled in Oregon's grant were minority individuals, but Census data adjusted for the 55 and older population show that minorities age 55 and older make up 18.14% of the state's population. The overall minority population in Oregon makes up approximately 12% of the state, but increases to 18% for the 55 and older cohort. The report also identified Oregon as one of 41 SCSEP grantees that served less than 80% of the proportion of Asians in the population. One percent of SCSEP participants during Program Year 2012 were Asian, but Asians make up more than four percent of Oregon's population. Using their connections within their communities, grantees will seek new partners to engage Asian older workers and increase their representation in SCSEP. Grantees will also be encouraged to connect with WorkSource Oregon to identify potential Asian participants who have already enrolled for job search services. While the 2012 analysis reflects underservice to minorities in general and Asians in particular, performance results from Program Year 2013 indicate that service to minorities has increased overall with Asians representing 4% of SCSEP participants in that year compared to 4% of Oregon's overall population.

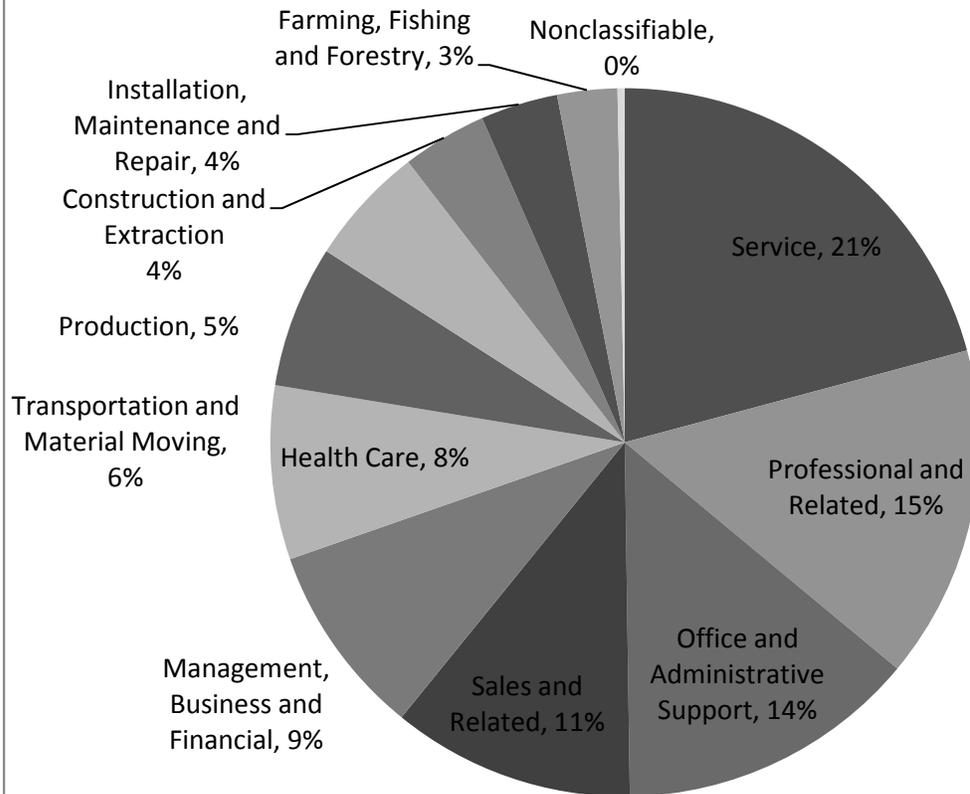
The 2012 SCSEP Minority Service Report shows that Hispanic individuals make up approximately seven percent of Oregon's population and four percent of the SCSEP participants in Program Year 2013 reported Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin. Local projects conduct outreach to assure that the maximum number of eligible individuals is aware of SCSEP and has an opportunity to participate. Some examples of outreach include distributing fliers with information in Spanish, classified advertisements in minority-focused newspapers and posters depicting minority individuals. Grantees will also be encouraged to connect with WorkSource Oregon to identify potential Hispanic/Latino participants who have already enrolled for job search services.

D) Long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations that may provide employment opportunities for older workers

More than 21% of Oregon's workforce is made up of workers age 55 and older. The Health Care and Social Assistance field currently employs the greatest number of older workers (56,307), and that industry is expected to need the most replacement workers in the near future. The industry that now employs the greatest share of older workers in Oregon is Utilities, with 2,282 workers, or 32% of all employees, in that industry at least 55 years old.

According to estimates by the Oregon Employment Department, Service occupations are expected to have the highest number of openings, with 135,000 projected openings by 2022. Service occupations include, among others, jobs in protective services, food services, building grounds and maintenance, and personal care.

Oregon Employment Department Estimates 2012-2022 Total Openings



Source: Oregon Employment Department, Oregon Occupational Employment

SCSEP participants receive host agency training in these industries through community service assignments like Area Agency on Aging (AAA) offices, senior centers, Centers for Independent Living, governmental offices, hospitals, schools and libraries. Over the course of this plan, SCSEP grantees will seek new host agencies and other partners in the high growth fields identified above, including healthcare and social services. Under the OWIB Strategic Plan, Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) have been tasked with implementing sector strategies to address the needs of key industries. Sector strategies are public/private partnerships designed to meet the needs of critical industry sectors within the regional labor markets. The partnerships are intended to facilitate communication and eliminate barriers that slow the process of recruitment, hiring, training and advancement within an industry. The LWIBs will develop or expand partnerships in key industries for a more highly-skilled workforce. LWIBS will determine which sectors to prioritize in their region, but some examples include clean technology, natural resource

industries, health services, and business services. Sector strategies will create opportunities for SCSEP participants as well as the participants in other workforce programs to engage with local employers and find new options for placements. Grantees will be encouraged to work closely with their LWIBs to explore these opportunities.

Within the industries outlined above, the Oregon Employment Department projects that the most job openings between 2012 and 2022 will be Service occupations, with 135,000 total projected openings. Oregon's SCSEP recognizes the need for service-based positions and provides resources to help participants prepare for those occupations. Experience Works recently added 34 new online courses and tests that participants have access to through JobReady. In addition, Experience Works encourages participants to take advantage of the 750 free courses available through GCFLearnfree.org, which offers free training on a variety of topics including computers, reading and math skills. Host agency sites offer participants the chance to become familiar with common office equipment and procedures such as word processing software, computer-based scheduling programs, email etiquette and customer service skills. SCSEP participants are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to enhance their competitive edge in an aggressive job market.

The majority of new applicants have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time and they lack the computer skills required for many positions. Experience Works provides basic and advanced computer skills training to all participants, depending on their needs, helping them develop the skills to secure employment in today's job market. Basic computer skills courses include, among others: Mouse Tutorial, Windows Basic Skills and Computer Basics. More advanced computer skills courses include Intermediate Word, Basic and Intermediate Excel, and Basic and Intermediate PowerPoint Presentations. SCSEP participants also take part in Job Club Training, which is designed to provide participants with the needed skill sets to help them conduct effective job search and secure employment.

To ensure that community service assignments provide training that meets the needs of both participants and employers, all participants complete an assessment and enter it in iMatch Skills before being assigned. iMatch Skills identifies the types of job openings in the community that most closely match the participant's assessment. Once a participant has indicated the type of job they wish to train for, SCSEP staff search for a community service assignment that gives the participant the training they need, as well as help the employer by providing extra help.

E) Long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment

Local SCSEP projects maintain relationships with the employers in their service areas. They continuously seek new host agencies and potential employers in their communities as placements for SCSEP participants. Strong relationships with local employers and LWIBs will be promoted to local SCSEP projects in order to enhance the level of collaboration with workforce partners and promote additional opportunities for placement in unsubsidized employment.

Easter Seals Oregon has been co-located in the Clackamas and Salem WorkSource Oregon offices since 2006. They have also had Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Work Systems, Inc., WICCO, and Job Growers, the three WIBs in their service area, since 2010. Easter Seals has a successful relationship with Work Systems Inc. in Multnomah County in which the liaison visits their office twice weekly to work with Employment Specialists and SCSEP participants. The co-location and liaison relationships have been instrumental in the success of the Easter Seals Oregon program. Being located directly in the WorkSource offices has made available numerous resources to SCSEP participants and staff. Easter Seals supports the WorkSource system by requiring all participants to enroll in the WorkSource system and work cooperatively with WorkSource staff.

Experience Works currently has in place MOUs and other formal agreements with AAAs, senior centers and local employment department offices. These relationships help the projects remain informed of changes in the local workforce and allow them to quickly notify participants of prospective employment opportunities. SCSEP projects will engage the LWIBs to ensure sector partnerships in their regions include opportunities for older workers.

F) Strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in 503(a)(2)(E)(ii) of the OAA

The local projects in Oregon strive to help SCSEP participants find unsubsidized employment before the end of their 48 month individual durational limit. The Entered Employment goal for Oregon's SCSEP in Program Year 2013 was 36.6% and the actual rate for that period was 39.7%. This level of success is due to the engagement of local project staff in their communities, identifying potential employers for SCSEP participants and helping them effectively market their skills. Collaboration with LWIBs and potential employers will be encouraged as a way to continue meeting the SCSEP performance measures.

G) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in Oregon under title I of WIA, including plans for using the WIA One-Stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older

All SCSEP participants are also co-enrolled with the One-Stop Career Centers. WIA Title I services including core, intensive and training services are available to SCSEP participants through the One-Stops. Core services include outreach, job search and job placement services. Intensive services provide more comprehensive assessments, the development of individual employment plans and counseling and career planning. Training services are those that link consumers with occupational and basic skills training in their communities.

SCSEP projects in Oregon have negotiated agreements with WorkSource Oregon, the local One-Stop system, and resource sharing is highly encouraged. Several SCSEP local offices have staff stationed in the One-Stops, which offers greater visibility and access to the program. Some One-Stops also serve as host agency sites for SCSEP grantees. One-Stop staff is more likely to promote SCSEP and refer qualified individuals for eligibility screening when they are familiar with the program.

H) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in Oregon under other titles of the OAA

The Oregon SCSEP sub-grantee and national grantees maintain relationships with the local AAAs to coordinate services and make appropriate referrals to one another. SCSEP participants have access to other Older Americans Act programs offered through the AAAs, including case management, nutrition, transportation and housing programs. AAAs refer individuals who may qualify for SCSEP to the local projects for eligibility screening. This relationship benefits both SCSEP and AAAs by assisting older individuals maintain their independence in their communities as long as possible.

The Oregon State Unit on Aging conducts web-based training courses on various programs that impact aging individuals. Previous topics have included Oregon Congregate and Home Delivered Nutrition Program Standards and Older Americans Act Legal Services and Elder Rights in Oregon. The target audience for these sessions is generally AAA directors, their staff and sub-contractors, and other interested community partners. Oregon conducted a web-based training in 2013 to educate AAA staff about the goals and requirements for SCSEP and encourage them to consider making referrals for their clients that could benefit from SCSEP.

Outreach to the Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disabilities (O4AD) will inform the AAA network about SCSEP and outline the recent changes to the sub-grantee structure. Outreach will be conducted in writing, and a representative will also attend the O4AD meetings to share information related to SCSEP and the issues faced by older workers in Oregon.

I) Planned actions to coordinate the SCSEP with other public and private 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

SCSEP projects in Oregon work with government programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Veterans Services to provide additional resources for participants with special needs. Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides individualized services that assist people with disabilities find and keep a job. 21 percent of SCSEP participants in Program Year 2013 were individuals with disabilities.

Grantees partner with non-profit organizations in their communities that provide services to older Americans as host agency training sites. Some successful partnerships in Oregon include St. Vincent de Paul, Habitat for Humanity and Salvation Army. Arrangements such as these help foster economic self-sufficiency for SCSEP participants, but also provide much needed support to community organizations at no cost to them. SCSEP grantees will continue to use their community connections to reach out to potential partners with an interest in serving older Oregonians.

J) Planned actions to collaborate the SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives

Several SCSEP projects in Oregon already have joined forces with the LWIBs and One-Stops in their areas to share resources and strengthen communication between the various workforce programs. The LWIB meetings provide opportunities for SCSEP staff to network with local business leaders, address the needs of older workers and identify potential resources in their communities. Partnerships between SCSEP and the LWIBs are mutually beneficial for both programs involved and their continued utilization will be encouraged in the future.

SCSEP grantees are local workforce strategic planning partners. As such, they are encouraged and expected to work with the LWIBs to identify opportunities in the implementation of the OWIB strategic plan. One successful arrangement that resulted from this kind of networking is the one between Experience Works and

Allied Barton, a large national security services company. Allied Barton alerts Experience Works of all job openings in Oregon, allowing SCSEP staff to notify participants of the opportunities right away.

K) Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the One-Stop delivery system and the steps that the state will take to encourage and improve coordination with the One-Stop delivery system

SCSEP projects work closely with the local One-Stops in their daily operations. In many cases the SCSEP office is located in the One-Stop along with other employment programs. This relationship allows local SCSEP staff to stay well-informed of changing labor market information in their region and encourages communication and resource sharing between SCSEP and other employment-related programs.

The state SCSEP office encourages local SCSEP projects to continuously develop their relationships with LWIBs to better represent the needs of SCSEP participants.

L) Oregon's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned longer-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

The Oregon Department of Human Services solicited vendors to provide SCSEP services under its grant in 2012. The solicitation resulted in three organizations submitting qualified proposals to administer the state SCSP grant. An evaluation panel was convened to review and score the proposals. Experience Works received the highest score and was subsequently identified as the single sub-grantee for Oregon's SCSEP grant, replacing the six subgrantees previously operating under the state grant. This change was driven by dramatic fluctuations in available grant funding over the last several program years and a need to more efficiently provide SCSEP services in Oregon.

The change from multiple sub-grantees to a single sub-grantee providing SCSEP services under the state grant will reduce the administrative burden associated with contract management and site monitoring. Although monitoring will still be conducted regularly, state staff will not need to visit each local office every year to monitor compliance. The use of a single sub-grantee that is also one of the national grantees in Oregon provides an added benefit of greater consistency across the state.

Another change that will improve SCSEP services in the long term is providing more distance learning options for SCSEP participants and staff. Experience Works continues to expand Internet-based training opportunities such as centralized training for staff and self-paced online resources to help participants progress toward their goals, even if they are unable to attend a class in person.

Oregon is working to educate AAAs about the value of SCSEP and explain the benefits to participants, the host agencies and the community as a whole. This effort started with informal conversations between SCSEP and AAA staff, and a web-based presentation for AAA directors and staff was delivered in May 2013 and then posted to the State Unit on Aging Web site. By working more closely with the AAAs, SCSEP will be more visible in the communities it serves and streamline access to community resources for participants.



Easter Seals

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Dear Mr. Kibby:

The following individuals participated in discussions concerning the SCSEP state plan for Oregon on October 28th, 2014;

- Mr. Ryan Kibby, State Unit on Aging, Department of Human Services
- Mr. Reggy DeJoode, Experience Works
- Ms. Catherine Todd, Program Director, Easter Seals Oregon
- Ms. Carol Salter, National Director, SCSEP Easter Seals
- Mr. Max Zielinski, Assistant Program Administrator, SCSEP Easter Seals

Thank you again for you time and assistance in putting together this information.

Sincerely,

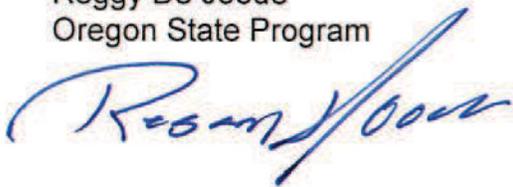
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Salter".

Carol Salter
Asst. VP, Workforce Development
National Director, SCSEP

To: Ryan Kibby
From: Reggy De Joode
Date : 11/12/2014
Subject: Oregon State SCSEP Plan

Experience Works has participated in the plan update process.

Reggy De Joode
Oregon State Program

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reggy De Joode".