

Maine Stand-Alone SCSEP State Plan

Four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service employment and other authorized activities for eligible individuals under the SCSEP program 2012 - 2015

Introduction

The State of Maine's Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS), the State Unit on Aging, has been delegated by Governor Paul LePage to develop the 2012 - 2015 Strategic State Plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). There are two sponsors of the Senior Community Service Employment Program in Maine. The first is the Governor's Program, administered by the OADS in the Department of Health and Human Services and the second is the National Able Network. For PY 2012, The Governor's program has 57 slots for participants and the sub recipient is Goodwill Industries of Northern New England. The National Able Network has 220 slots and both programs have slots in each of the 16 counties in Maine. In developing the State Plan, Maine has addressed the role of SCSEP relative to other workforce programs and initiatives as well as other programs serving older workers, and has articulated how all grantees examine and, as appropriate, plan longer term changes to the design of the program so as to better achieve its goals.

The OADS and the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) have initiated discussions regarding whether the Governor's Program should continue to be administered through the OADS, which is the State Unit on Aging, or if the program should be transferred to the MDOL, where it can be aligned with other job training programs. Meetings and communications have taken place between the two offices, but a final decision has not yet been determined. When a decision has been made, the SCSEP State Plan will be amended accordingly.

Maine is not only the oldest state in the nation with the highest median age; it is also the most rural state in the nation. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 15.9% of Mainers are age 65 or older and 61.3% of Mainers live rurally. In addition, Maine's population is aging faster than any other state. In the last 20 years, the median age rose by nearly 9 years, from 33.9 to 42.7. Currently, 22.6% of Maine's total population is 60 and older, and in the four years between 2006 and 2010, Maine's population age 65 and older grew by more than 18,000 from 193,000 to 211,000. By 2030, it is expected that one out of every four Mainers will be over 65.¹ During the 2008-2018 period, the 55+ population in the U.S. workforce is expected to grow by 12 million, or 43%. By 2018, nearly one-quarter of the labor force will be age 55 and older. This trend is largely attributed to the aging of the "Baby Boomers," lowered birth rates, and longer life expectancies.²

From 2000 – 2006, there was a decrease in the percentage of the population under the age of 45 and an increase in the 45 – 64 age group. In comparison to national statistics, Maine was ahead of the curve with regard to the percentage increase of people age 45 – 64 and those age 75 and over.³

As Maine's Baby Boomers age, its workforce population is steadily declining. Maine also has the second smallest percentage of population under 18 in the country and a low birth rate. The rapidly aging population and slow population growth is expected to continue for two

¹ Maine State Plan on Aging, 2012 - 2015

² Maine's Aging Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges, **A report of the Maine Jobs Council, OLDER WORKER COMMITTEE**, fall 2010

³ The Center on Aging and Work, State Perspectives at Boston College, February 2008, by Michelle Wong with Tay McNamara, Sandee Shulkin, Chelsea Lettieri, and Vanessa Careiro

decades, which will result in a steadily decreasing pool of skilled workers whose skills match those of the opened positions.⁴

In 2010, of the nearly 63,000 Maine adults 65 or older who live alone, 71% are women. In addition, more than 72% of those 85 and older in Maine are women and it is clear that the female-to-male ratio will increase significantly over time. Special consideration needs to be taken in relation to the supports older women in Maine need.

More than 137,000 Maine citizens are veterans. It is estimated that approximately 66% of Maine's veterans are 55 and older and 41% are age 65 and older. This means that more than a quarter of Maine's 65 and older population are veterans. Many veterans do not self-identify as such and may not be taking advantage of benefits and services available to them.

Maine has one of the highest rates of disabilities in the country, and the highest rate in the northeast. A little more than 16% of Maine's population are disabled, with about 19% of people over 65 being disabled. Maine's *Snapshot 2011, Maine Workers with Disabilities* report estimates that Maine lost 22,000 jobs during the recession and another 11,000 jobs the six months following the end of the recession. Job losses by those with disabilities during this time far exceeded those without disabilities. In 2009, only 39% of working-age adults with disabilities were employed as compared to 80% of working-age adults with no disabilities. Lack of employment options for people living with disabilities means they are often more reliant on government programs, such as Social Security Disability Income. In 2009, the median household income for a working-age person with a disability, \$30,000, was more than half that of a working-age person without a disability. Also in this year, it is estimated that nearly half of

⁴ www.mdf.org Projected Percent Maine Population Change by Age Cohort, 2010-2030 Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Maine's disabled working-age people lived in poverty or near-poverty, living below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.⁵

More than 174,000 Mainers live on Social Security with a mean income of \$14,700. 10% of Maine's older adults live at or below the Federal Poverty Level, which is higher than the national average. This does not tell the complete story, however, as Maine older adults have other financial challenges, including a relatively high income tax rate, high food costs, high electricity costs (41% above the national average) and an aging housing stock that is heated with oil and is generally in need of weatherization and repair.⁶

Maine's decline in younger workers will lead to a projected number of labor shortages in a growing number of sectors of the economy. Traditionally, retirement occurs at age 65. However, without enough younger workers to replace the retiring workers, sustaining an economic growth within the state becomes more difficult. Only if people over age 65 remain in the workforce can there be growth in the labor force and a better possibility of offsetting the shortage problem. Many workers intend to continue to work beyond traditional retirement age. Research shows that 68% of workers between the ages of 50 and 70 who have not yet retired report they plan to work in some capacity into their retirement years, or never retire.⁷

The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State

The Prime Sponsors have an agreement in place that if positions need to be transferred because of a shift in the population resulting in the need to move positions from over-served to

⁵ Maine State Plan on Aging 2012 - 2015

⁶ Maine State Plan on Aging, 2012 - 2015

⁷ Maine's Aging Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges, **A report of the Maine Jobs Council, OLDER WORKER COMMITTEE**, fall 2010

underserved areas or a reduction of funding causing fewer slots, the two sponsoring organizations will determine how best to make the transfer after notifying and getting permission from the Regional Project Officer. The Governor's Program and National Able Network will meet to determine how to best make the changes, with the least disruption to participants. The sponsors will, to the best of their ability, make the changes based upon attrition, as participants move into jobs or leave the program for other reasons.

In the past, the two Prime Sponsors met quarterly to discuss relevant issues and this procedure will be resumed when a new SCSEP Coordinator is in place for the Governor's program. The Equitable Distribution Report is sent to the U.S. Department of Labor annually. Participant numbers are reviewed annually and regular email and telephone contact is maintained between the Prime Sponsors.

The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP;

The National Able Network has a collaborative relationship with Catholic Charities Maine Refugee and Immigration Services, Maine's only refugee resettlement program, which is dedicated to helping those seeking a new life in America become independent, productive members of the community. They also recruit participants through relationships with other organizations serving individuals with disabilities, homeless, veterans, and other minorities. The National Able Network has a higher percentage of minority participants than the state average.

When Goodwill Industries of Northern New England does intakes, they look at the 8 priorities of service, the person: is 65 years of age or older; has a disability; has limited English proficiency or low literacy skills; resides in a rural area; is a veteran; has low employment

prospects; has failed to find employment after utilizing services provided under title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.); or is homeless or at risk for homelessness; and places any applicants with barriers at the top of the wait list if there are no slot openings. Once a slot is open, they look at the graded wait list and try to find an appropriate host site, if one is not already available.

The Maine SCSEP Sponsors equitably serve rural and urban areas; with the percentage of Maine citizens who live in rural areas being 61.3% and 57% of SCSEP participants live in rural areas.

Long-term projections for job growth in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers, and how those relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained, and the types of skill training to be provided

Maine's economy has stabilized following the worst downturn in 80 years but modest job growth in some sectors continues to be offset by job losses in other sectors. Payroll employment has not changed appreciably the last two years, remaining well below prerecession highs. Unemployment remains high and the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission does not expect a return to peak levels of employment until 2017, ten years after the onset of the national recession and eight years after the recovery began. Maine faces major workforce development challenges in the years ahead from the demographic trends that are slowing labor force growth. The future direction of Maine's economy depends on how these challenges are managed to assist both individuals to be productive and earn good wages, and companies to effectively staff operations to meet product

and service demand. If employers are unable to identify sufficient staff with the appropriate education and skills, they will locate elsewhere.⁸

Demand for workers in health care, information technology, social, professional and other services are rising. The staffing needs of those industries are primarily for professional and technical functions - which generally require post-secondary education or training and offer higher-than-average earnings - and for service, sales, and administrative support functions - which generally do not require post-secondary education or training and offer lower than average earnings. The result is job growth concentrated at both the upper and lower ends of the education and earnings spectrum.⁹

The industry sectors in Maine that employ the most workers over age 55 are Healthcare and Social Assistance, Educational Services, and Retail Trade. For men ages 55-64, the manufacturing industry sector has the highest employment with 8,420 people. For women ages 55-64, the health care and social assistance industry sector has the highest employment with 14,331 people. For men ages 65+, the retail trade industry sector has the highest employment with 2,553 people. For women ages 65+, the health care and social assistance industry sector has the highest employment with 3,016 people. The finance and insurance industry has the top monthly wages for both men and women ages 55+¹⁰

Maine's growing population of older adults will result in increased need for services delivered in the home, since almost all older adults wish to stay in their home and many will need assistance, which can be provided by other older adults who have received training. Host site development where participants can receive the relevant skill building opportunities to meet

⁸ Workforce Investment Act State Plan 2012 - 2016

⁹ Workforce Investment Act State Plan 2012 - 2016

¹⁰ Maine's Aging Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges, **A report of the Maine Jobs Council**, OLDER WORKER COMMITTEE, fall 2010

the demand for these services in the future is an important focus for the Governor's Program and the National Able Network. The State plans to provide direction to the National sponsor and State sub recipient to focus host site development in places where training in home care services and supports are available, such as Adult Day Services and senior housing sites. Building this capacity will be discussed when regular meetings between the National and State programs resume, with leadership from the new State Coordinator who is soon to be hired. In addition, efforts will be made to broaden host site development into the business community so that the jobs training environment is similar to that of the regular work sites in the community. By doing so, the State will be able to provide relevant training and develop skills to meet the growing demands of Maine's aging population and their desire to age in place.

The State's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment

The Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) is a three-year grant from the US Department of Labor, sponsored by Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. The grant began in 2009 and was scheduled to end in 2012, but due to a no cost extension, the program will continue through March 2013. The grant has the dual purpose of 1. Providing training for people 55+ plus and 2. Educating employers on the value of older workers Training is focused on IT, Healthcare and Green Energy and each LWIB (4 in the state) was given \$50,000 to train 50 people in their regions. By the end of the grant period, not every region has reached their goal, and this was the reason for the no cost extension.

The AWI also sponsored "Seasoned Worker Forums" which were 1/2 day session for people 50+ that included some employers interested in hiring older workers. AWI also developed

a workshop titled "Project You", a similar program conducted by the SCSEP Program Coordinator at Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, who is also an AWI Navigator. The Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine developed a workshop that they presented to over 200 employers around the state on the value of hiring older workers.

The State's strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for entry into unsubsidized employment

The State Legislature directed that the Office of Elder Services be combined with the Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities to form the Office of Aging and Disability Services. The merger combines regional operations under one organizational structure, creates clear lines of communication and coordinates central and regional office functions. This merger better serves people in a coordinated, integrated manner by creating access that is more effective, reducing duplication of effort and improving individual outcomes. The merger provides more opportunities for enhancing existing workforce initiatives within the cognitive and physical disability community.

A *planned action* is to develop Memorandums of Understanding between the Maine Department of Labor, WIA One-Stop delivery system, its partners and SCSEP to formalize their relationship regarding referrals, placement of participants and other activities to strengthen the partnership and to ensure the successful experience of the SCSEP participant.

Another *planned action* is to explore the potential of training SCSEP participants as AWI navigators to replace those positions that will no longer be available under the Aging Workforce Initiative (AWI). The role of the navigators was developed under the AWI because mature

worker specialists may help make older job seekers feel more welcome at the job centers. Maine is one of the States participating in the AWI that has used the navigator model. A report reflecting on preliminary lessons learned under AWI noted that older job seekers in particular may need additional assistance in deciphering new career options and training, and benefit from more intensive assistance with career exploration and job search strategies (CAEL and Council on Competitiveness, 2011). According to USDOL officials interviewed for this report, these navigators serve as active case managers and can help older workers stay connected to the workforce system, community colleges, and employers.¹¹

Currently, participants in the National Able Network receive quarterly reassessments and updates to their Individual Employment Plans and also participate in the Job Readiness Training Program in which they receive training and assistance with resume development, interviewing skills, and instruction in the use of social media techniques. Continuous improvement of performance is also enhanced by involvement with adult education classes, workshops offered through the Maine DOL, participation in Women, Work, and Communities (the only statewide women's economic development organization in Maine, organized into six regions and serving all 16 Maine counties from 10 Centers and 8 outreach sites), through the Aging Workforce Initiative, and training at host agencies.

All participants in the State SCSEP were referred to the AWI Seasoned Worker Forums or to the Project You workshops. The State SCSEP also refers participants to a Work Ready 55+ program, sponsored by Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc., that gives participants a credential for

¹¹ NTAR Leadership Center Report: The Public Workforce System: Serving Older Job Seekers and the Disability Implications of an Aging Workforce, May 2012, www.ntarcenter.org

job readiness. Participants are also referred to local libraries that have sponsored free computer training.

Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the State 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

The internal structure of Maine's WIA is undergoing changes, more fully articulated in the WIA State Plan, but summarized here and the OADS has submitted comments on that Plan. The SCSEP leadership will be involved in these changes, which include reorganization of the way Maine Department of Labor programs are administered to better meet the needs of the business community, with significant changes of the WIB, SWIBs, and other aspects of DOL.

On December 13, 2011, Maine's newly elected Governor, Paul LePage, spoke to the Maine Jobs Council (MJC), which serves as the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and articulated his vision for the workforce development system in Maine. He said his primary objective was to maximize the return on investment for federal and state training funds for Maine's citizens and employers. The Governor's stated goals for Maine's workforce development system include: Expand the available funding for job training; Require a minimum percentage of funds spent on occupational skills training; Increase the numbers of individuals who would otherwise be served by ensuring the appropriate level of administrative overhead; Be more relevant to businesses; Increase involvement of private sector with the workforce development system; Expand business and community input at the local level and to the State Workforce Investment Board; Increase consistency of state-wide core customer service, accountability and policies, and; Increase coordination with local Economic Development agencies and other sources of economic development activity.

To achieve the Governor’s vision, Maine needs to develop a new Strategic Plan that focuses on three key elements: a revitalized State Workforce Investment Board that is business led and data driven; a restructured workforce investment system that is effective, efficient and accountable to Maine’s citizens and relevant to Maine’s businesses, including re-designated local workforce investment areas; and Industry Partnerships, directed by business needs, as the cornerstone of the workforce development system. The Governor charged the SWIB with developing a Strategic Plan that actualizes this vision. Along with the WIA Plan, Maine is submitting a waiver to the United States Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration (USDOL ETA) asking that the State Workforce Investment Board be given the authority to carry out the roles and functions of the Local Workforce Investment Boards.¹²

The SCSEP and AWI Program Manager for Goodwill Workforce Solutions and the Maine State Director of the National Able Network Senior Services attend quarterly OWC meetings as members and help develop policy suggestions for the SWIB. In the past, the State Coordinator staffed the OWC meetings, but with the arrival of a new State Coordinator, his/her role will change to that of an active participant. SCSEP representatives also nominate employers whose policies and practices match the needs of mature employees for the Silver Collar Employer Award, which is sponsored by the Older Worker Committee and awarded annually. Goodwill is a partner in several Career Centers and the service provider for six coastal counties.

The Older Worker Committee became a standing committee rather than ad hoc in August 2012 and promotes the value of Maine’s workers over age 55 through advocacy, education, and policy development to meet the needs of those workers and their employers. The Older Worker Committee instituted the “Silver Collar Employer Award” to recognize employers in Maine

¹² Workforce Investment Act, Strategic Plan, 2012 - 2016

whose policies and practices match the needs of mature employees. In addition, the committee produced a status report on older workers in Maine, *Maine's Aging Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges*, which explores programs and policy strategies to make work an attractive option for seasoned, experienced workers who might otherwise consider retirement. The Older Workers Committee has also produced two very popular pamphlets, the *CareerCenter Older Worker Resource Guide* and an executive summary version of *Maine's Aging Workforce*.¹³

A *planned action* is to open discussions with the Maine Department of Labor to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in each One-Stop delivery system and discuss steps to improve coordination between SCSEP and the One-Stop delivery system. The NTAR (National Technical Assistance and Research Center) examined WIA program data nationally to assess the rate at which One-Stops were serving older workers and found that One-Stops slightly under serve older workers relative to younger workers. The examination also showed that older workers in WIA-funded programs were less likely to receive training than younger individuals who access WIA services.¹⁴ Older worker specialists or career navigators, who are themselves SCSEP participants, assigned to One-Stop Career Centers could help ensure that older workers are aware of training and employment opportunities available in their community.

Another *planned action*, which could take place at meetings of the Older Workers Committee, is to discuss how to focus on the specific needs and issues of older workers and how to improve training opportunities at One-Stops for this large and growing segment of adults seeking employment. One aspect to be explored is how to make information about the SCSEP more visible on Maine Department of Labor, Career Center, and the OADS websites, so job seekers will be aware of the support and training available through SCSEP. For example, the

¹³ WIA State Plan

¹⁴ The Public Workforce System: Serving Older Job Seekers and the Disability Implications of an Aging Workforce: NTAR Leadership Center, May 2012: www.ntarcenter.org

Career Center website could list “Older Workers” on their drop-down menus along with Young People, Veterans, People with Disabilities, and other categories.

Maine’s Department of Labor already serves targeted populations, per the Workforce Investment Act, paying particular attention to older workers, veterans, low and moderate income individuals and youth and as the state with the nation’s highest median age, they are actively engaged in reaching older workers. A *planned action* is for the SCSEP representatives on the Older Worker Committee to recommend exploring and potentially replicating the work done by the Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce center in Arapahoe County, Colorado, which operates a 50+ and Fabulous Employment Resource Center, described as a “full-service resource center for the mature job seeker” and offers computers with Internet access, and one-on-one resume and career assistance.¹⁵

The WIA State Plan aptly describes older workers in the workforce – nationally and in the state of Maine as: *During the 2008-2018 period, the 55+ population in the U.S. workforce is expected to grow by 12 million, or 43%. By 2018, nearly one quarter of the labor force will be age 55 and older. This trend is largely attributed to the aging of the “Baby Boomers,” lowered birth rates, and longer life expectancies. Maine’s decline in younger workers will lead to a projected number of labor shortages in a growing number of sectors of the economy. Traditionally, retirement occurs at age 65. However, without enough younger workers to replace the retiring workers, sustaining an economic growth within the state becomes more difficult. Only if people over age 65 remain in the workforce can there be growth in the labor force and a better possibility of offsetting the shortage problem. Finally, many workers intend to continue to work beyond traditional retirement age. Research shows that 68% of workers between the ages*

¹⁵ NTAR Leadership Center Report: The Public Workforce System: Serving Older Job Seekers and the Disability Implications of an Aging Workforce, May 2012, www.ntarcenter.org

*of 50 and 70 who have not yet retired report they plan to work in some capacity into their retirement years, or never retire.*¹⁶

This description of older workers ties in well with the State Plan on Aging and the SCSEP State Plan regarding the role of older workers in Maine in the future and also the needs of Maine's aging population. Due to the economic downturn, people who retired may find it necessary to rejoin the workforce because the plans and savings set aside for retirement will no longer support their needs due to the decreased value of their investments. Anecdotally, OADS and the area agencies on aging are experiencing an increase in the number of people inquiring about training and retraining programs.

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

Goal 4 of the State Plan on Aging for 2012 – 2015 is: *Encourage aging and disabled people to stay active, healthy and connected to their communities through employment, civic engagement, and evidence-based disease and disability prevention programs* and Objective 2 of the plan is to *Assist aging and disabled adults with barriers to employment to gain skills necessary to re-enter the work force*. To meet this goal, the OADS, the State Unit on Aging, will partner with community organizations to create and promote volunteer opportunities; and also will collaborate with public and private organizations to promote the advantages of hiring mature workers. OADS will actively participate with groups and committees that address barriers to employment opportunities for aging and disabled adults and that optimize available training opportunities for participants. A *planned action* is to ensure SCSEP is one of the organizations with which OADS collaborates. Another *planned action* is to develop Memorandums of

¹⁶ Workforce Investment Act State Plan for 2012 - 2016

Understanding between OADS, the area agencies on aging and SCSEP to formalize their relationship regarding referrals, placement of participants and other activities to strengthen the partnership between the Aging Network and SCSEP.

SCSEP works closely with Maine's five Area Agencies on Aging and provides community service opportunities at several of their sites. The National Able Network has host agency agreements with the area agencies and currently participants assist in Adult Day Services as well as prepare and serve meals at congregate meal sites. One of the Area Agencies on Aging, Spectrum Generations, provides space for Client Service Representatives from the National Able Network to conduct interviews and assessments.

A *planned action* of the Governor's Program will be for the SCSEP Coordinator, who is located at the OADS Central Office, to act as an intermediary between SCSEP grantees and OAA activities being carried out by the OADS and the five area agencies on aging in Maine in order to increase awareness of information and services that may be of benefit to SCSEP participants. This collaborative approach will ensure that SCSEP participants are aware of programs such as:

- *Living Well-Chronic Disease Self-Management Program*, an evidence-based program supported by grants to the OADS from the Administration on Aging and the National Council on Aging. This program is for anyone living with a long-term health problem. This is an effective training program for older workers to improve productivity through improved health. Some participants have been trained as leaders and these peer leaders are effective because they often have chronic conditions themselves and draw from their own life experiences.

- Another program, the “Benefits Checkup,” developed by the National Council on Aging is designed to help seniors get the benefits they need and deserve. These programs include, but are not limited to, prescription drugs, utility bills assistance, meals and health care. Participants also can receive assistance through the outreach programs: the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) and other programs offered at the Area Agencies on Aging.
- *Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)* in Maine. Older Mainers and Mainers with disabilities are currently served by ADRCs in all of Maine’s 16 counties. SCSEP has referred participants to various locations and, in return, have had people referred to SCSEP.
- Housing related needs such as fuel assistance, weatherization, SNAP, connections to home and community based services, comprehensive assessments for services as appropriate (may be the participant but could be spouse, other family member – like a disabled adult child)
- Legal Services for the Elderly which provides free, high quality legal services to Maine’s socially and economically needy elderly age 60 and over.
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, whose mission is to advocate for quality of life and care for long term care consumers.

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

The National Able Network plans to continue their association with over 140 active host agencies as well as another 100 which do not have participants placed with them currently. In addition, the Able Network is associated with drug and alcohol recovery groups and faith based organizations such as Catholic Charities Maine, Salvation Army, and churches which place participants in thrift stores or other positions that are not associated with religious activities.

The governor's Program places SCSEP participants in 34 active sites including: area agencies on aging, Community Action Programs, Goodwill retail stores, housing sites, a soup kitchen, Catholic Charities Maine, a hospital, Career Centers, a homeless shelter, a senior center, a library and an arboretum.

Planned actions to coordinate the SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives

All participants in the Governor's Program are referred to the AWI Seasoned Worker Forums and now to the Project You workshops. CCWI also sponsors a Work Ready 55+ program that gives participants a credential for job readiness that we refer our SCSEP participants to as well. We have also referred people to local libraries that have sponsored free computer training. A *planned action* is to ensure that participants in the National Able Network program are also referred to the AWI workshops and programs.

The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services includes these *planned actions*:

- The Governor's Program is currently subcontracted to Goodwill of Northern New England, but that contract is due to go out to RFP, with a new contract to be awarded in July 2013.

- Regular meetings between the National Able Network and Goodwill Industries of Northern New England will be resumed.
- The State Coordinator, when hired, will actively participate in the Older Workers Committee rather than staffing it, giving an expanded opportunity to impact the actions of the Committee and actively advocate regarding older worker needs
- Discussions between the Governor’s Program and National Able Network will focus skill building and training opportunities that are relevant to the jobs available in Maine
- The Governor’s Program and the National Able Network will work with the Maine Department of Labor to develop a more formal, uniformed partnership between the Career Center system and SCSEP, with a consistent relationship established, rather than the current system, where the relationship between SCSEP and the Career Centers varies between regions. The SCSEP sponsors will also explore the possibility of having Career Centers assign a dedicated staff person to serve older workers and work closely with SCSEP staff. The SCSEP sponsors will also explore the possibility of assigning older worker specialists or career navigators to all Career Centers. If these specialists were SCSEP participants - older job seekers themselves – they could develop strong peer-to-peer relationships with older workers seeking employment and job training.

Advice and Recommendations have been sought from representatives from relevant community organizations and agencies. Steps that have been taken include:

- OADS prepared the initial draft of the State Strategic Plan and solicited comments from The Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP), Training and Development Corporation (TDC),

National Able Network, the national sponsor in Maine, and Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, the sub-recipient for the State of Maine SCSEP.

- The National Able Network and Goodwill Industries of Northern New England made the Plan available to participants by notifying them of its placement on the OADS website.
- OADS also solicited comments from State and Local Boards under the Workforce Investment Board.
- Notification the SCSEP State Plan was placed in newspapers and newsletters, as appropriate, enabling community organizations working with older adults, older adults – unemployed and otherwise – and members of the community to have an opportunity for input into the initial draft State Plan at the Public Hearings and through email. Notification was placed in: **LIST NEWSPAPERS**
- Non-profit providers of employment services were provided an opportunity to review and submit comments on the draft plan through the OADS website. In addition, members of the Older Worker Committee of the Maine Jobs Council were sent emails including the draft and asked to comment.
- The five Area Agencies on Aging were notified via email through their Executive Director that the draft of the State Plan was available at the OADS website.
- Affected communities and unemployed older workers were able to access the plan via the OADS website and through notices placed in local newspapers.
- Community-based organizations serving older individuals had access to the Plan through the Internet and committee involvement.
- Business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce had access through a member serving on the Seasoned Workforce, LLC from Rockland, Maine.

- Labor organizations and safety organizations concerned with workplace safety had access to the State Plan draft from an email sent to a committee member.
- Other educational organizations and WIA organizations were provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft State Plan through the OADS website and email.

The State's four-year strategy regarding serving eligible individuals

In consultation with the Center for Workforce Research and Information at the Maine Department of Labor, estimates were prepared, based on Census microdata, not compiled statistics, drawn from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, to use for comparison between the number of eligible individuals in the State to the current distribution of SCSEP participants. Three-year data (combined 2008, 2009, and 2010 American Community Surveys) was used to improve the sample size, which is quite small for the population requested. In all cases, individuals in group quarters are not counted due to the poverty criteria (not developed for group quarters). An individual was counted as having a disability if one or more disabilities applied (self-care, vision, hearing, independent living, ambulatory, cognitive).

In Maine, the number of individuals age 55 and over, at or below the 125% of the poverty level is 54,656, 14.4% of the total population of Maine. Of that number: 613, or 1% do not speak English well; 29,283, or 54% have one or more disabilities; and 2,276, or 4% are a race other than white.

The highest percentages of individuals age 55 and over, living at or below 125% of poverty are in Aroostook, Washington, Somerset, Franklin and Oxford Counties, accounting for 36.9% of the total. These counties are some of the most rural in Maine, where job opportunities are limited and there is little to no public transportation. Twenty-six percent of the SCSEP slots are

assigned to these areas and both the Governor’s Program and National Able Network collaborate with local community organizations to find and place eligible older adults in job training sites.

Participants in the greatest social need are those who are socially isolated due to lack of English proficiency, disabilities, rurality, and other conditions which limit their ability to participate in their communities. The relative distribution of those in the greatest social need blends with the other aspects addressed in this section.

Distribution of SCSEP Participants in Maine:

	Governor’s Program	%	National Able Network	%	Total SCSEP Participants	%
Male	35	38	132	36	167	36
Female	56	62	237	64	293	64
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin	1	1	5	1	6	1
American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7	7	28	7	35	7.5
White	85	93	335	91	420	91
Family income at or below poverty level	74	81	348	94	422	91.5
Individuals with disabilities	17	19	59	16	76	16
Individuals with limited English proficiency	2	2	23	6	25	5
Individuals with low literacy skills	8	9	37	10	45	10
Individuals residing in rural areas	65	71	198	59	263	57
Individuals with low employment prospects	50	55	288	78	338	73
Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	8	9	65	19	73	16
Veterans (or spouses)	14	15	59	16	73	16

The current and projected employment opportunities in the State and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals

The top three occupations with the highest percentages of workers as a percentage of the workforce in that occupation are, for older workers age 50 – 59: healthcare practitioner, 29.8%; business and financial operations, 27.8%; and management at 27.4%.

Maine has the oldest population in the nation, with the oldest of the large baby boom generation recently reaching the retirement age of 65 and other aging baby boomers in their 50s and 60s. The number of births per year has trended so low that Maine has very little natural increase (births minus deaths). In the near-term Maine expects a modest labor force growth, but in less than a decade, more people will age out of the labor force than the number of young people entering the labor force.¹⁷

Compounding this situation is the fact that older workers generally have more experience, higher earnings, higher labor force participation rates, and lower unemployment rates than younger workers who are still developing the discipline and experience necessary for success. Employers will be challenged by this loss of high-value experience in their workforce.¹⁸

Particularly in the current economy, mature workers who are displaced from jobs experience significant difficulty in reentering the labor market, and therefore may be more likely to withdraw from the labor force. Over 62% of Maine's population who are employed are ages 55-64. With the oldest workforce in the nation and the majority on the verge of retirement, Maine industry is faced with critical, high end, skills-gaps not being addressed through traditional employment readiness or two year training paths; approaches that often result

¹⁷ Workforce Investment Act State Plan 2012 - 2016

¹⁸ Workforce Investment Act State Plan 2012 - 2016

in entry-level work skills yet require industry to take on the burden of real occupational skill training. With the aging baby boom generation, increasing numbers of low-income, unemployed older workers will require assistance.¹⁹

The OWC provided advisory assistance and fulfilled oversight responsibilities for the AWI and assisted the Muskie Institute in its Employer Initiative component of the AWI, facilitating job postings and developing employer education and feedback mechanisms. The Maine Centers for Women, Work, and Community, is offering their traditional career planning and career changing programs customized for people over 55. The AWI, in a report earlier this year, mentioned that it has enrolled over 150 older workers into AWI funded training. The majority of the training is in healthcare but there are also several in energy and information technology. Over 85 have successfully completed training and received their industry-recognized certificate.²⁰

The State's procedures and time line for ensuring an open and inclusive planning process that provides meaningful opportunity for public comment

The public has had opportunities to comment on the plan through public hearings, email and phone. The notice was published in multiple newspapers, interested parties were notified and the draft plan was available for download from the OADS website. Public comments are incorporated in the final plan.

The SCSEP State Plan was posted on the OADS website on Friday, September 28, 2012, along with information about the two public hearings which were held on Wednesday, October 3. The hearing in Bangor was at the Eastern Area Agency on Aging and the hearing in Augusta

¹⁹ Workforce Investment Act State Plan 2012 - 2016

²⁰ Workforce Investment Act Strategic Plan 2012 - 2016

was at the OADS Office in the Marquardt Building. A total of **NUMBER** attended the hearing in Bangor and **NUMBER** attended the hearing in Augusta. The comments received at the hearing and responses are included in the **Appendix**

Relationship of the SCSEP State Plan to the Equitable Distribution Report

The Equitable Distribution Report was prepared jointly by SCSEP sponsors in Maine in accordance with Older Worker Bulletin 03-06 and as required by Section 508 of the Older Americans Act. Title V positions in Maine are allocated to two (2) Prime Sponsors each covering all sixteen (16) counties. These are the Governor's SCSEP and National Able Network. The Equitable Distribution Reports for Program Years 2011 and 2012 are included in **the Appendix** of this State Plan along with the names and addresses of the two Prime Sponsors of SCSEP.

The two sponsors of SCSEP in Maine hold ongoing discussions on Equitable Distribution and other topics in the interest of better serving SCSEP participants. These discussions take place at the quarterly meetings of the Older Worker Committee of the WIA which was staffed by the SCSEP Coordinator at the OADS, who is no longer with the program but when that position is filled, the new coordinator will actively participate on the Committee rather than staff it. The Committee, as of August 30, 2012, became a Standing Committee of the State Workforce Investment Board instead of an Ad Hoc Committee.

No redistribution of positions will be made as a result of this State Plan proposal.