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The Illinois Department on Aging is pleased to share its draft Senior Community Service Employment Program State Plan Modification for Program Years 2026-2027 for public comment and review.

Authorized by Title V of the Older Americans Act, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) which serves unemployed low-income persons who are 55 years of age and older and who have poor employment prospects by training them in part-time community service assignments. SCSEP assists eligible participants in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment.

Placing older individuals in community service positions strengthens the ability of the individuals to become self-sufficient by building their skills needed for successful employment, provides the support needed to organizations that benefit from increased civic engagement, and strengthens the communities that are served by such organizations.

SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities (Host Agencies), including schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and senior centers. On a national level, the program provides over 40 million community service hours to public and non-profit agencies, allowing them to enhance and provide needed services. Participants work an average of 20 hours a week, and are paid the highest federal, state, or local minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.

Participants must be at least 55, unemployed, not job ready, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. A person with a disability may be treated as a “family of one” for income eligibility determination purposes at the option of the applicant.

The Illinois SCSEP State Plan for PYs 2024-2027 was approved in 2024. This State Plan Modification meets the requirements issued by the USDOL for Two-Year Stand-Alone plan modifications for Program Years (PYs) 2026-2027.

The proposed State Plan Modification for public review and comment is available at ilaging.illinois.gov Please submit any comments to Aging.OAS@illinois.gov by close of business on July 28, 2026.

Respect for yesterday. Support for today. Planning for tomorrow.
ilaging.illinois.gov

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966; 711 (TRS).

ILLINOIS

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

STATE PLAN

Proposed, Modification for PY 2026-2027

I. Authority and Purpose

This two-year modification to the Illinois Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Stand-Alone State Plan for Program Years (PY) 2026-2027 is submitted pursuant to Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 14-25, issued May 28, 2026, by Henry Mack, Ed. D., Assistant Secretary, U. S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA).

In accordance with Section 503(a) of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and SCSEP regulations at 20 CFR Part 641 Subpart C, the Governor or the Governor's designee is required to submit a SCSEP Four-Year State Plan with an update at least every two years. This modification provides an updated two-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service employment and other authorized activities for eligible individuals under SCSEP services in Illinois, considering the current relative distribution of eligible individuals and employment opportunities within the state.

This plan modification comprehensively covers all changes to the required elements of SCSEP Stand-Alone State Plans as specified in the SCSEP section of the Information Collection Request (ICR) for Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modifications Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (OMB Control Number 1205-0522), in accordance with TEGL 14-25.

II. Federal Compliance and Civil Rights Assurances

In developing this State Plan modification, the Illinois Department on Aging affirms compliance with all applicable federal requirements, including:

- The United States Constitution
- Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq. and 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.)

- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C 1681 et seq.)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C 794)
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C 6101 et seq.)
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C 12131 et seq.)
- Executive Orders 14151, 14168, and 14173
- U.S. Department of Justice Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination (July 29, 2025)

IDoA affirms that no federal funds will be used in any manner that violates the United States Constitution or applicable federal civil rights laws. IDoA and its subgrantees do not implement activities that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. All program activities are designed to ensure nondiscriminatory access and equal opportunity for all eligible individuals.

III. State Agency and Program Information

Administering Agency: Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA)

Program: Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Plan Period: Program Years 2026-2027 (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2028)

Submission Deadline: July 31, 2026 (Extension requested and granted per TEGL 14-25-Original deadline June 26, 2026)

State Contact: Luis A. Rodriguez

IV. Subgrantee Update

For PY 2026, the sole subgrantee is anticipated to be National Able Network, Inc. (Able), pursuant to a competitive notice of funding opportunity issued in PY 2025.

V. WIOA Planning Strategic Priorities and Labor Market Alignment

In accordance with TEGL 14-25 and Executive Order 14278 (Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future, April 23, 2025), IDoA has reviewed its currently approved SCSEP State Plan and is realigning strategies and investments with current economic and labor market information (LMI) to reflect changes in growing and declining industries, occupations, and skills in Illinois.

IDoA's modifications reflect the five strategic pillars of America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age, as summarized in TEGL No. 07-25, to ensure Illinois SCSEP activities align with the national workforce development vision.

Labor Market Information (LMI) Alignment

IDoA has worked with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) to review current LMI data and align SCSEP training and placement activities with in-demand sectors and occupations in Illinois. State planners have identified the following high-growth industries for SCSEP participant training and placement:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance — the largest employment sector in Illinois with continued growth
- Public and Government Services — strong host agency pipeline for SCSEP participants
- Skilled Trades and Construction — aligned with Executive Order 14278 priorities
- Transportation and Warehousing — growing sector with accessible entry-level opportunities for older workers

IDoA will ensure that training objectives for SCSEP participants' paid community service assignments are aligned with the specific needs of employers in high-growth industries, consistent with TEGL 14-25 guidance that encourages industry-driven training strategies informed by sectoral partnerships.

WIOA Co-Enrollment Strategy

In accordance with TEGL 14-25, IDoA is committed to co-enrolling SCSEP participants into Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs simultaneously to create a comprehensive and nonduplicated service plan. This approach leverages WIOA's training and career services with the specialized individualized paid work experience SCSEP provides, increasing the likelihood of participants transitioning to unsubsidized sustainable employment. Activities will include:

- IDoA will work with Able and WIOA One-Stop Centers to establish co-enrollment protocols for SCSEP participants.
- IDoA will increase active communication and engagement between SCSEP providers and WIOA staff to ensure all stakeholder agencies are aware of the roles, responsibilities, and requirements of all partners serving older adult jobseekers in Illinois.
- IDoA will collaborate with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to serve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients aged 55–64 who fall under new federal work requirements as a pipeline for SCSEP and WIOA co-enrollment.

VI. Economic Projections and Population Data

Illinois Population Overview

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's July 2025 population estimates, Illinois has a total population of 12,719,141. The older adult population continues to represent a significant and growing share of the total population, underscoring the continued need for SCSEP services across the state:

Demographic	Estimated Count	% of IL Population
Total Illinois Population	12,719,141	100%

Persons 65 years and over	2,276,726	17.9%
Persons under 18 years	2,696,458	21.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, July 1, 2025 (V2025); 2020–2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

County Unemployment Data — April 2026 (Most Recent Available)

The following table presents the most current county-level unemployment rates for Illinois, as reported by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) for April 2026 (not seasonally adjusted). These counties represent the highest areas of need and are prioritized for SCSEP service delivery and outreach in PY 2026–2027 where modified SCSEP slots are available, consistent with 20 CFR 641.325(d):

County	Unemployment Rate (April 2026)	SCSEP Priority Level
Macon	5.6%	High Priority
Cook	5.3%	High Priority
Boone	5.2%	High Priority
Knox	5.2%	High Priority
Vermilion	5.2%	High Priority
Peoria	5.1%	High Priority

Source: (IDES), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), April 2026

VII. Long-Term Strategy for Employer Engagement

Community employer engagement is key to contributing to the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment and ensuring program sustainability. IDoA and Able will implement the following strategies at both the participant service level and employer engagement level, in accordance with 20 CFR 641.302(e):

Participant Service Level

- Utilize the Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) and related assessments to identify specific knowledge and skill development areas to focus on during SCSEP participation, aligned with in-demand occupations identified through LMI.
- Seek host agency placements that align with the participant's intended employment goals, particularly in high-growth industries including healthcare, skilled trades, and public services.
- Align training objectives of participants' paid community service assignments with the specific needs of employers in high-growth industries to help participants secure in-demand, unsubsidized jobs.

Employer Engagement Activities

- Coordinate and/or educate local employer networks, business associations, community service and public service organizations regarding the SCSEP program and the benefits of hiring SCSEP participants for unsubsidized employment opportunities.
- Facilitate relationship building between local SCSEP providers and host agencies with local colleges or related employment placement programs to assist SCSEP participants

and local hiring agencies with completing efficient and effective hiring processes.

IDoA is facilitating meetings with Able and Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to promote SCSEP and encourage appropriate referrals and notice of unsubsidized job opportunities.

VIII. Strategy for Serving Eligible Older Individuals Most in Need

IDoA is committed to ensuring SCSEP services reach eligible individuals most in need, with particular focus on closing enrollment gaps for underserved populations, consistent with 20 CFR 641.302(c) and OAA Section 503(a)(4)(E).

The following table presents PY 2022 baseline data on SCSEP service to minority individuals, which serves as the foundation for IDoA's PY 2026–2027 targeted outreach strategies:

Population Group	SCSEP % Served PY 2025	55+ IL Census %
Overall Minority	91.00%	19.40%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	11.0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	0.5%
Asian	3%	5.4%
Black or African American	82%	12.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0.05%
White	7%	80.6%
Two or More Races	0%	0.8%

*Sources: PY 2024 Final; Performance Report for SCSEP 07/01/2024-06/30/2025
Annual County Resident Population Estimates by Age*

The data indicates an enrollment gap for Hispanic older adults, who represent 11.0 percent of the Illinois population but only 6 percent of SCSEP participants. For PY 2026–2027, IDoA will implement the following outreach and enrollment strategies to close this gap, in full compliance with applicable federal civil rights laws and Executive Orders 14151, 14168, and 14173:

- Work with Able and WIOA One-Stop Centers to expand outreach to Hispanic older adults through community partnerships and language-accessible informational materials.
- Assist each sub-grantee in identifying and setting goals to implement local service region strategies to increase the participation rates of older adults from underserved communities that meet the eligibility criteria for SCSEP services.
- Increase enrollment of SNAP recipients aged 55–64 through the IDHS partnership, expanding the eligible participant pipeline.

IX. PY 2025 Program Performance Summary

Participant Wages and Fringe Benefits (PWFB) Expenditures

For PY 2026, IDoA is pursuing an Additional Training and Supportive Services (ATSS) waiver for PY 2026 to reduce the minimum PWFB expenditure requirement to 65%, consistent with TEGL 14-25 guidance, to allow for training to prepare participants for in-demand jobs.

X. Performance Negotiations — PY 2026–2027

In accordance with OAA Section 513 (42 U.S.C. § 3056k(b)(1)(A–F)) and 20 CFR 641.720, ETA and SCSEP grantees negotiate expected levels of performance for the first two years of each grant cycle. Performance level negotiations for Program Years 2026 and 2027 began in Spring 2026. ETA will use an objective statistical model to account for actual economic conditions and participant characteristics.

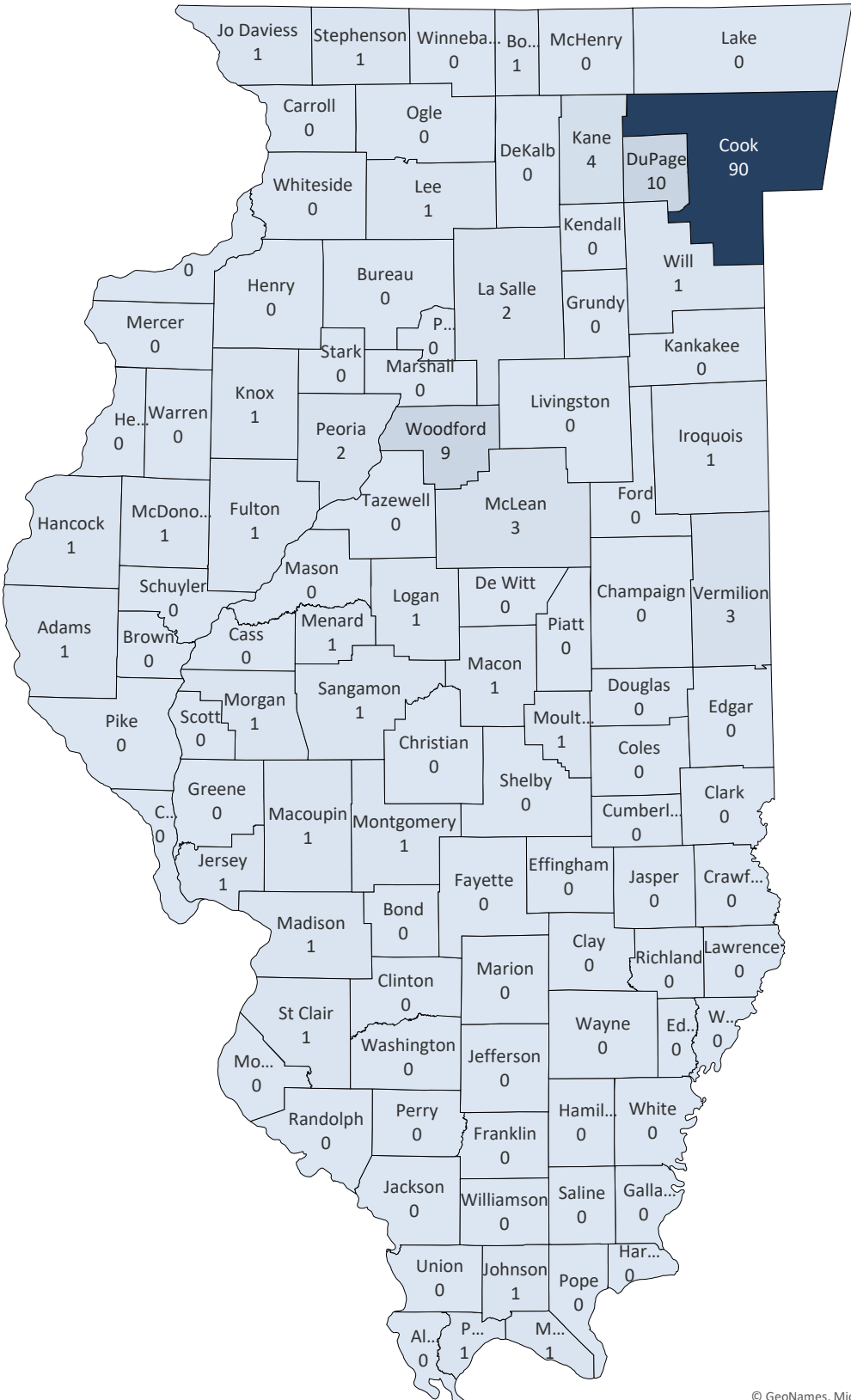
Performance Measures	Goal	Current
Entry into Unsubsidized Employment	N/A	15.0%
Employment Retention (2nd Quarter)	23.1%	15.0%
Employment Retention (4th Quarter)	21.0%	1.7%
Median Earnings	\$3,438.00	\$4,436.00
Most-in-Need Participants Served	2.8	2.52
Community Service Hours	50.0%	42.5%
Training Hours	N/A	651

Source: TEGL 14-25

XI. SCSEP Authorized Positions by County

The map below shows the available SCSEP positions by county for PY 2026-2027.

Illinois Modified Slots by County



XII. Service Delivery and Coordination Updates

Planned Community Services and Locations

Illinois has developed strong and robust community and social service networks that address the needs of communities throughout the state. IDoA and National Able Network serve participants through placements across three main service network categories:

Aging Network	Community & Social Services	Governmental & Public Agencies
Area Agencies on Aging Adult Day Services Care Coordination Units Congregate/Home-Delivered Meal Providers	Community Centers Public and 501(c)3 Physical and Behavioral Health Organizations Public and 501(c)3 Community Service Organizations	Local, County, and State Agencies Libraries Parks Systems Public Schools

Continuous Improvement Strategy

Quality assurance and improvement activities remain a primary priority for IDoA for PY 2026–2027, aligned with IDoA State Initiative #2 to drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities that emphasize person-centered and trauma-informed services while maximizing effectiveness of services delivered through the Aging Network. Activities will include:

- IDoA will facilitate monthly state sub-grantee meetings to provide technical assistance based on Grantee Performance Management System (GPMS) data review and performance trend identification.
- Performance measurements will be reviewed quarterly with the sub-grantee agency to discuss actual versus goal performance and develop corrective plans as needed.
- Program monitoring of the sub-grantee agency will be completed on an annual basis to provide technical assistance with intent of improving participant exit into unsubsidized employment.
- Semi-annual trainings will be facilitated by IDoA to the sub-grantee agency on service delivery and administrative topics, including goal setting, best practices in employment opportunity identification, and proper documentation.

XIII. Advice and Public Comment

In accordance with 20 CFR 641.350 and TEGl 14-25, SCSEP state grantees must make the Two-Year State Plan Modification available for public comment before submission. The Governor, or the Governor's designee, has followed established state procedures to solicit and collect public comments on this state plan modification (20 CFR 641.350).

IDoA has sought and will continue to seek the advice and recommendations of the following organizations and individuals with expertise in older worker issues (20 CFR 641.315):

- Representatives of state and area agencies on aging
- State and local boards under WIOA

- Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the state
- Social service organizations providing services to older individuals
- Grantees under Title III of the OAA
- Affected communities
- Unemployed older individuals
- Community-based organizations serving older individuals
- Business organizations
- Labor organizations

The state plan describes the procedures used to obtain such advice in public comments, including the timeline for ensuring an open and inclusive planning process (20 CFR 641.325(f) - (g)), as well as a summary of the public comments received (20 CFR 641.325(h)). National grantees have also coordinated with IDoA in accordance with 20 CFR 641.320(b).

Comment Period: June 29, 2026 – July 28, 2026

Published at: ilaging.illinois.gov

Distributed to AAAs, TEGL 14-25 listed entities, IDoA's News for the Network

Submit comments to: Aging.OAS@illinois.gov

A summary of all public comments received and IDoA's responses will be included as Attachment A to the final submitted plan.

XIV. Governor's Concurrence

This modification plan will be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Governor of the State of Illinois in accordance with OAA Section 503(a) and 20 CFR Part 641 Subpart C. An attachment letter from the Governor naming the designee, as required by TEGL 14-25, will be included.

XV. Certification

The Illinois Department on Aging certifies that this modification plan was developed in compliance with all applicable federal requirements, including TEGL 14-25, the Older Americans Act Title V (42 USC 3056) as amended through Public Law 116-131, and all applicable federal regulations at 20 CFR Part 641. The plan will be made available for public comment, and all comments will be duly considered prior to final submission.