

GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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Albert Bryan, Jr. – Commissioner

March 26, 2008

Ms. Alexandra Kielty
U.S. Department of Labor/ ETA
Office of Workforce Investment
Division of Adult Services
Room S-4209
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Ms. Kielty,

The Virgin Islands Department of Labor, acting as the Governors designee, hereby submits the State Plan for the United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's Senior Community Service Employment Program. This State Plan has been created in accordance with USDOL ETA Training and Employment Guidance Letter number 16-07.

Enclosed with this letter are one original and two copies of the State Plan and two of the required appendices. Additional copies of this package will be made available to Keeva Davis and Cara Vileno, our regional SCSEP contacts.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this transmittal, kindly contact Ms. Arah Lockhart, Assistant Commissioner of Employment and Training at 340-776-3700 x2057. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Albert Bryan, Jr.
Commissioner

Enclosure(s)

XC: Arah C. Lockhart, Assistant Commissioner, E&T
Michael Rhymer-Charles, Assistant Commissioner, DHS
Adele Soto, Executive Director, WIB
Cindy Rollins, Director, DHS
Lisa Newton, Director of Federal Grants

Section 1. Plan Overview & Purpose

The Older Americans Act Amendment was signed into law on November 13, 2000. This amendment is designed to strengthen and improve the delivery of services to older workers through the national network of State, area agencies and other members of the service provider community. Additionally, it serves as the vehicle for reauthorizing and enhancing the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP).

SCSEP, administered by the US Department of Labor, is the only Federally-sponsored Job creation program targeted to low-income older Americans. The program subsidizes part-time community service jobs for unemployed, low-income persons age 55 and older who have poor employment prospects. These opportunities results in benefits not only to the participants but to their communities in general.

The enactment of the 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments mandates significant changes to the former State Plan by requiring the Governor or his/her designee to submit a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community services for eligible individuals under the SCSEP. Additional change under this amendment requires a description of the planning and implementation process for administering SCSEP services throughout the State. Further, the new State Plan is intended to foster both short-term and long term coordination among grantees and sub-recipients operating within the State and Local Board Workforce Investment Act. Other requirements of this revised plan, emphasizes the importance of increased partnerships and the allocation of resources where there is greatest need.

Under the direction of the Governor and through his designee, the Virgin Islands Department of Labor, this plan is designed to address the coordination activities between the SCSEP and the Territory's other workforce development programs and initiatives. It represents the strategic approach which will be undertaken by the Territory to promote, coordinate, support and administer SCSEP activities. Key success factors to this undertaking will include the enhancement of community awareness; establishment of new and improvement of existing partnerships, collaboration and coordination....**particularly between the SCSEP and the VI Career Network (VICAN) "One Stop" System....(see sections 7&8)** and, an extended effort to pool workforce development resources which will enable older workers to enter the workforce.

Section 2. Involvement of Organizations and Individuals

As the Governor's designee, the VI Department of Labor and the Territory's primary entity for Senior Services, programs and activities - Department of Human Services, both assumed the lead role for development of the State Senior Employment Services Community Plan (SSESCP). Representatives from both agencies created the 'core' for the plan's research and development requirements. Additionally input was solicited and received from the State Workforce Investment Board and through its membership comprised of other, Government, Private, Business, Unions and Community Organization representatives. Further, the plan design and development process reflects feedback and recommendations from past/current program enrollees and host agencies.

Section 3. Solicitation and Collection of Public Comments

All efforts will be expended to provide for the solicitation and collection of public comments on the Virgin Islands SCSEP Plan. This process will include the following:

- Posting on the VIDOL website
- Distribution and announcement of plan availability for review comments at the VIDOL One Stop Centers, Public Libraries and University of the Virgin Islands campuses
- Availability of plan to all DHS Senior Services Program Divisions, partner agencies and SCSEP program participants

Section 4. Equitable Distribution of SCSEP Positions within the Virgin Islands

While Title V of the Older Americans Act promotes geographical distribution of SCSEP positions so that all eligible persons have reasonable access to SCSEP, section 518(b) of the OAA defines priority individuals as those who qualify based on one or more of an established set of criteria. Additionally other populations characteristics as defined in OAA sec, 503(a) (4) (C) (i)-(iv) was taken into consideration when determining the Equitable Distribution (ED) formula of enrollees.

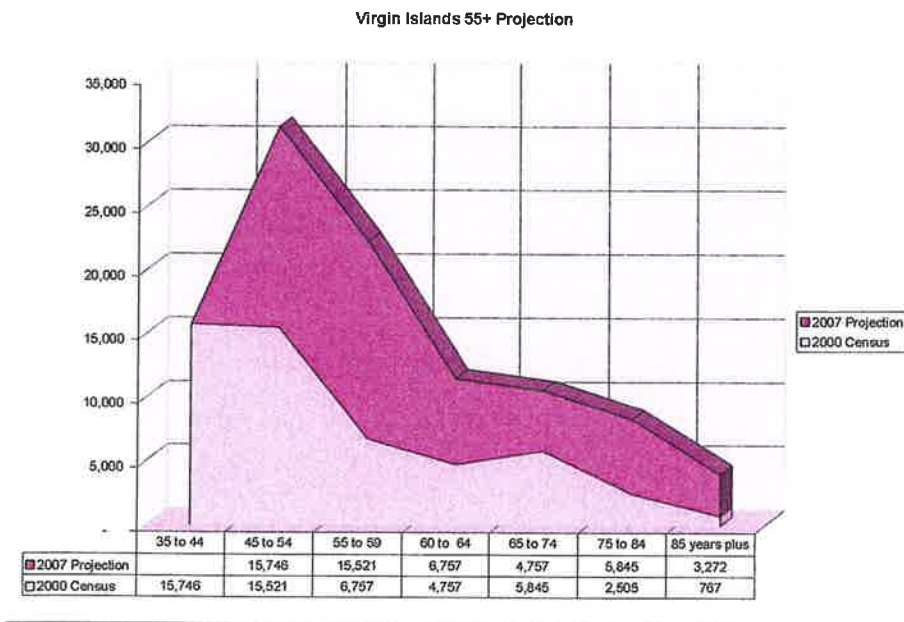
The basic distributions of the SCSEP positions within the Virgin Islands shall operate in the following district with enrollments level as indicated:

<u>Territorial/District</u>	<u>Number of Positions</u>
St. Thomas, St. John, District.	73
St. Croix, District	<u>64</u>
TOTAL # OF POSITIONS.....	137

Authorized positions will be distributed as per the estimated 1994 Population and Housing Survey. Although census data is not available on which to base the report, with the assistance of the Division of Older Workers, estimated geographical distribution was done utilizing the following process:

- Use of 1994 Population and Housing Survey of 5,441 citizens between the ages of 55 and above that are below the poverty level.
- Use of the percentages of the total population per district and divided percentages into the 5,441.
- Inserted actual number of slots filled per district into an Excel file that generated the estimated percentages. The distribution of SCSEP slots mirrors that of the estimated population distribution.

(See figure I)

Figure 1-1 Virgins Islands Projected Population

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing Report U.S. Virgin Islands. Note: Inserted graph is a projection based on population remaining constant and does not account for deceased or changes in demographics. As per census, update conducted by the Virgin Islands Eastern Caribbean Center there has been no significant swing in the population.

Recommendation: Grant will state flexibility and decision making authority with slot distribution to grantees. This will allow the territory flexibility to move slots from areas with high incomes and low need to another district with low incomes and high need due to job losses and/or disasters.

Regional Economic Overview

The labor market indicators continue to reflect economic growth for the Virgin Islands at a modest pace. This growth is seen by an increase in the Civilian Labor Force over the past 3 years. As of 2007, the Workforce stood at 52k with 49k of that amount employed in jobs, and a 5.9% unemployment rate as of January 2008 (*as per Local Area Statistics from the V.I. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics*). Based on job openings and wage records this growth is most apparent in the manufacturing and service sectors, more specifically in the skilled trades particularly in construction jobs such as electrical, plumbing, and masonry. This growth is expected to remain steady for the next 2.5 years and with various announced projects and permit applications, modest increases in these sectors will occur over a 5 to 6 year period. Business growth has also been a factor with an increase in the number of establishments in the Virgin Islands (*As per Quarterly Census of Employment Wages provided by Virgin Islands Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics*). A five year trend from 2002 to 2006 has shown that the Virgin Islands Business sector has grown by 7.48%, with annual gross pay for workers moving upwards. In the short term, the average wage of Virgin Island workers has remained constant with no material shifts; in addition there has been a leveling of average hours worked and productivity (See Figure 1-2).

FIGURE 1-2 Current Employment Statistics

Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment by Industry ‡	2007	2007	2006	Change	
	† Jul	Jun	Jul	Month	Year
TOTAL NONAG. WAGE & SALARY EMPLOYMENT	46,820	46,240	45,920	580	900
TOTAL PRIVATE	33,520	33,780	32,830	-260	690
GOODS-PRODUCING	5,260	5,380	5,430	-120	-170
Construction, Natural Resources & Mining	3,040	3,140	3,070	-100	-30
Manufacturing	2,220	2,240	2,360	-20	-140
SERVICE-PROVIDING	41,560	40,860	40,490	700	1070
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	8,560	8,630	8,480	-70	80
Wholesale Trade	770	770	780	0	-10
Retail Trade	6,170	6,190	6,110	-20	60
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	1,710	1,720	1,730	-10	-20
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	1,620	1,670	1,590	-50	30
Information	820	800	820	20	0
Financial Activities	2,620	2,600	2,630	20	-10
Finance & Insurance	1,410	1,400	1,430	10	-20
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,210	1,200	1,200	10	10
Professional & Business Services	3,480	3,500	3,480	-20	0
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	1,230	1,230	1,200	0	30
Management of Companies and Enterprises	410	420	410	-10	0
Administrative & Support Services	1,840	1,850	1,870	-10	-30
Educational & Health Services	2,300	2,360	2,330	-60	-30
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,380	1,360	1,400	20	-20
Leisure & Hospitality	7,430	7,400	7,140	30	290
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	730	690	670	40	60
Accommodation & Food Services	6,700	6,710	6,470	-10	230
Accommodation	4,130	4,150	4,020	-20	110
Food Services & Drinking Places	2,570	2,560	2,450	10	120
Other Services	3,050	3,110	2,520	-60	530
Government	13,300	12,460	13,090	840	210
Federal	830	830	830	0	0
Territorial ¥	12,470	11,630	12,260	840	210

Average Hours and Earnings of Manufacturing Production Workers	Jul† 2007	Jun 2007	Jul 2006		
Number of Manufacturing Production Workers	1,595	1,614	1,608		
Average Weekly Earnings \$	\$1,053.56	\$1,073.80	\$1,157.13		
Average Weekly Hours	41.3	41.3	43.0		
Average Hourly Earnings \$	\$25.51	\$26.00	\$26.91		

Source: V.I. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In summary, the prognosis for economic growth remain optimistic and based on labor market information many opportunities for placing seniors in unsubsidized employment will be available in PY 2008. There exist new markets and career paths in the construction, service, and financial sectors that will provide opportunity for participants.

Section 6. Increasing Participant Placement in Unsubsidized Employment and Employer Outreach.

Unsubsidized placement is the focal point of the SCSEP program. Increasing the number of persons who may enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment in both the public and private sectors requires significant strengthening of the current recruitment, private sector relationships and overall coordination between SCSEP sub-grantee and its partners. As such this plan has identified and established the following strategies for immediate application by the SCSEP operator. They include:

- Marketing and Outreach to employer/businesses and other Community based organizations
- Revision of the existing MOU between SCSEP and the VICAN One Stop Career Network system; and establishment of specific processes, service offerings/flow, and shared case management responsibilities to increase potential for unsubsidized employment.
- Coordination with the Workforce Investment Board and the VIDOL Transformation Strategic Plan

Similarly, monthly and quarterly review meetings have been established between designated representatives of the SCSEP and VICAN staff to facilitate constant dialogue and evaluation of participants service needs and performance progress.

Other strategies for increasing the prospect of participant placement in unsubsidized employment will target the use of services and WIA funded training currently available through the VICAN One Stop Center. Through regularly scheduled meetings and with the implementation of a recently developed plan geared at integrating services across both agencies; SCSEP enrollees will now have direct and/or staff assisted access to a host of CORE, Intensive and Training services. Following is a brief summary of services available in the One Stops:

- **Assessment**

All participants in the V.I. SCSEP will undergo assessments for job aptitude, job readiness, job preferences and potential job placement into unsubsidized employment. This assessment will be conducted during the intake process. Assessment will be used as a basis for developing each enrollee's individual employment plan and will also determine the most appropriate community service assignment

- **Individual Employability Plan (IEP)**

Each enrollee's assessment will be used to develop the Individual Employability Plan (IEP). The IEP will contain information on their skills, training, work history and capabilities. Participants and program staff will jointly create employment goals and identify the appropriate sequence of services for the enrollee based on the assessment, including services from the SCSEP and other relevant agencies, to include the VI CAN One Stop Center.

The plan will be reviewed and updated at least twice annually.

- **Training**

SCSEP enrollees will have access to all a training opportunities available to customers of the VICAN One Stop Centers. Computer literacy training will be mandatory for all participants. Training will, as necessary and appropriate, provide enrollees with job-related classroom training prior to and in preparation for work placement. Classroom training will be delivered through seminars, lectures and visual aids. Training curricula will be related to the senior's assessment and his/her Individual Employability Plan and will vary depending on the program to which s/he is assigned. Additionally customized training will be developed in concert with business and sector demand needs of the territory's workforce. OJT and Work-Experience options will be utilized to support the training objectives. Future plans for expanding the range of training options for seniors include collaboration with the Department of Education and the University of the Virgin Islands to create educational and vocational training programs tailored to workers age 45 and older.

- **Supportive Services**

Seniors will have access to a host of support services necessary to facilitate their connection to and job retention in, the workplace.

- **Placement into Unsubsidized Employment**

The VI SCSEP will continue to make every attempt to place at least 20% of its enrollees in unsubsidized employment during 2008, and anticipates increasing this goal by 2%-5% over the four year plan period. Coordination with the Workforce Investment Board will provide access to information on high growth industries and the identification of employment opportunities with career ladders. This approach coupled with the use of available VI One Stop System services are just few of the strategies identified for achieving this goal. Additionally, favorable consideration for continued use of SCSEP enrollees will be given to those departments or agencies that have employed enrollees in unsubsidized jobs.

Private sector engagement will be utilized to increase unsubsidized placement through the following mechanism:

- a. Use of the One-Stop Career Center's Resource Rooms for career exploration, job search and resumes writing.
- b. Registration with the Department of Labor's One Stop Center for job search, job club, job placement and counseling. Enrollees will be encouraged to check with Job Service on at least a quarterly basis for potential job openings and referrals.
- c. Registration/certification with the Department of Labor's Division of Training for partial subsidization of enrollee wages in private sector jobs (On-the-Job- Experience and customized training).
- d. Utilizing the On-the-Job-Experience (OJE) option for those enrollees/participants that have completed at least two (2) weeks of a community service assignment and whose IEP indicate specific occupational preferences and training needs and, a potential to transition to unsubsidized employment.
- e. Registration/certification with the Department of Labor's Division of Training for enrollment in courses offered by the Workforce Investment Act Eligible Training Providers once participants' IEP indicate the necessity and or capability to complete such training. The V.I. SCSEP will continue to make every attempt to find unsubsidized employment for at least 20% of its enrollees.

7. Community Service Needs

Given the demographic make up of the Territory and the fact that the Virgin Islands has only one (1) SCSEP grant and sub-grantee, it is highly unlikely that there will be any major shifts in the current populations to be served. However, significant emphasis will be placed on monitoring of emerging and unmet community service needs as they are identified. The SCSEP plan will be revised as necessary and appropriate strategies will be deployed to address such needs. In order to accomplish this task, grantee and sub-grantee will maintain close relationships with the Economic Development Authority, the Workforce Investment Board and other related community organizations involved in and/or affected by these changes.

Additionally, SCSEP will be encouraged to work closely with community agencies in developing assessment protocols and conducting community service needs surveys.

Government, private sector for profit and non-profit entities will be assembled to review and address the survey findings and will be charged with designing programs in response to the unmet needs.

Section 8. Coordination with Other Programs, Initiatives and Entities

Given the overall goal and objective of the State Coordination Plan to maximize the opportunities for integrating older workers into the workforce, the Territory will utilize a number of innovative strategies to support this outcome; to include at a minimum:

- Development of a Marketing, Outreach and Recruitment Program for participant enrollees and employers; and partnership building with all segments of the community.
- Identification of senior program operators, providers and support service agencies/organizations with whom partnerships can be established to improve coordination of effort.
- Improve and strengthen existing coordination between SCSEP operator and the VICAN One Stop System; to include a) revision of existing MOU, b) out-stationing of SCSEP staff at One Stop Center locations; c) co-enrollment and sharing of customer information/databases
- Creation and establishment of the SCSEP operator website
- Joint and multiple agency coordinated Job Fairs targeted at increasing employment for Seniors
- Establish a forum for information sharing, strategic planning and coordination through regularly scheduled bi-annual meetings with all stakeholders
- Develop program evaluation methodologies to facilitate ongoing assessment of program performance and improvement requirements

Section 9. Avoidance of Disruptions in Service

Actions that will be taken to avoid disruptions in service:

1. The Department of Human Services shall monitor the performance under grant-supported activities to ensure that time schedules are being met and other performance goals are being achieved.
2. The Department of Human Services shall compile and submit to the V.I. Department of Labor, the Senior Community Service Employment Program data on a timely basis and electronically as required by the regulations of the U. S. Department of Labor. The data will provide vital management information relating to:
 - Enrollment levels, turnover, and placement into unsubsidized employment.
 - Allocation of employment positions among specific areas of community service.
 - Performance measures and other reporting elements.

- Problems, delays, or adverse conditions which will materially affect the ability to attain program objectives, prevent the meeting of time schedules and goals, or preclude the attainment of program work units by established time periods. A statement of the remedial action proposed shall accompany this disclosure.
- Favorable developments or events, which enable meeting time schedules and goals sooner than, anticipated or producing more work units than originally programmed.

When there is new census data indicating that a shift in the location of the eligible population has occurred, we will work with the national grantees to gradually shift positions (from over-served areas). Participants will be encouraged to transition into unsubsidized employment in order to open up positions for eligible individuals in the areas where there has been an increase in the eligible population. Based on the Virgin Islands twenty-seven month time limit, participants should complete their community service employment assignment in a timely enough fashion that disruption in service should not be a problem. If there is over-enrollment for any reason, those participants that are located in the over-enrolled areas will be made aware at time of enrollment that the position is temporary and all steps will be taken to move them into unsubsidized employment.

Section 10. Improvement of SCSEP Services

The SCSEP grantee will maintain ongoing oversight and evaluation of program operations and services. Regularly scheduled meetings with the sub-grantee will serve as the vehicle for discussions on program/services weaknesses; and, as is determined necessary Corrective Action Plans will be developed and implemented.

With the onset of Program Year 2008, performance standards and measurable outcomes will be established for accomplishment. Additionally, a monitoring plan will be developed and utilized to facilitate review of SSCEP compliance with plan goals and objectives. Other steps identified towards this services improvement effort includes:

- Monitor enrollment activities to determine low or declining enrollment
- Develop recruitment strategy plan of action to reach the hardest to serve/underserved population, especially those with barriers
- Develop a media campaign and outreach program plan
- Solicit community support and training resources to access information technology, computer training programs, English as a Second Language (ESL). Resources will be developed to address culture barriers among the growing Hispanic and French emigrant population.
- Utilize community based, ethnic oriented, social clubs (emphasis on growing Hispanic and French populations), faith based organizations, ethnically centered local merchants, non-profit organizations, and public social service agencies, including Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Disabilities.

Section 11. Appendices

- **Copy of the Equitable Distribution Report.....N/A**
- **Copies of the public comments.....pending**
- **Letters of attestation of participation in development of the State Plan from all required parties:**
 - *One (1) included from DHS Administrator, Senior Citizens Affairs**
 - * Remaining two (2) to be forwarded under separate cover upon receipt**



Department of Human Services

Division of Senior Citizens Affairs Office of the Administrator

March 19, 2008

Honorable Albert Bryan
Commissioner
Department of Labor
2203 Church Street
St. Croix, VI 00820-4612

The Department of Human Services, Division of Senior Citizens Affairs (SCA), welcomes the opportunity of continued partnership with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Much has been done collaboratively to achieve the objectives of preparing older Virgin Islanders for reentry into the workforce. SCA continues to train, provide work experience, and accept SCSEP enrollees into unsubsidized employment, through its various programs and services. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Homemaker Services Program
- Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged
- Queen Louise Home for the Aged
- Nutrition Program for the Elderly
- Socio-Recreational Programs
- Family Caregiver Support Program
- Information and Referral Services

This letter of support demonstrates the Division of Senior Citizens Affairs' ongoing commitment to work collaboratively with community partners in elevating the quality of life for senior citizens in the Virgin Islands. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,


Eva J. Williams
Administrator

Cc Chris Finch
 Michal Rhymer-Charles
 Cheryl Plaskett

"Working Together to Make a Difference"