



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS



OFFICE ON AGING

P.O. BOX 502178, SAIPAN MP 96950

CNMI

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM **STATE PLAN**

PROGRAM YEAR (PY) 2024- 2027



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I. Verification of Intent

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA), Office on Aging (OoA), hereby submits the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) State Plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) for the period of four years covering Program Years (PY) 2024-2027.

The Office on Aging shall have the authority to develop and administer the SCSEP State Plan in compliance with the requirements of the Older Americans Act P.L. 109-365 and employment requirements of the U.S. Department of labor.

The CNMI SCSEP is responsible to provide community service and work-based training for low-income, unemployed seniors. Its primary goal is to get seniors back in the workforce through training and eventual placement in unsubsidized employment.

The CNMI Senior Community Service Employment Program State Plan hereby submitted has been developed in accordance with applicable Federal statutory and regulatory requirements.



Walter A. Manglona
Director/SCSEP Administrator
Office on Aging, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA)

Date: 3/19/2024



Francisco M. Rabauliman
Secretary
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

Date: 3/19/24

I hereby approve the Four-Year Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Stand- Alone State Plan covering Program Year (PY) 2024-2027 for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).



Arnold I. Palacios
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Date: 3/26/24

II. Introduction & Purpose

Introduction

Through funding received from the ETA U.S. Department of Labor, the Office on Aging yearly provides a certain number of jobs depending on the availability of funding for our senior citizens over the age of 55 throughout the CNMI. The Senior



Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) also known as the Title V program is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. The maximum durational limit for each participant is 48 months.

SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and governmental agencies, including schools, hospitals, and senior centers.

Participants work an average of 20 hours a week, and are paid the federal minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.

Participants must be at least 55 years old, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through WIOA.

Purpose

The purpose of the stand-alone plan is to outline a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service employment and other authorized activities for eligible individuals under the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The state

plan is intended to foster both short-term and long-term coordination among various organizations and key stakeholders.

Section 503 of the Older Americans Act requires the Governor, or the highest government official in each state to submit a state plan. The plan must include a four-year strategy for statewide provision of community service training and other authorized activities for eligible unemployed low-income seniors. The plan may be submitted as stand-alone or combined state plan. The CNMI SCSEP is submitted as an independent plan (stand-alone).

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in the CNMI is important since there are many low-income seniors age 55 and older with low employment prospects. The majority of these individuals have no college degree and many do not even possess a high school diploma. With the large amount of college graduates returning from abroad and looking for work, it has become much more difficult for non-skilled seniors to obtain such employment. SCSEP has an important role in promoting healthy aging and civic engagement. Many participants face financial hardship and require additional income to subsidize their daily needs, while allowing them to remain independent and active. The CNMI SCSEP assists these individuals to obtain the proper skills training to get them back in the workforce.

III. Context

The Northern Mariana Islands and Its People

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is a self-governing U.S. territory. In 1976, President Gerald Ford signed PL 94-241, to establish a Covenant of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States of America. The CNMI comprises fourteen separate islands arranged in two gently curving arcs between 13- and 21-degrees north latitude and approximately 145 degrees east longitude. The islands lay roughly 1,491 miles east of the Philippines and 1,553 miles southeast of Japan. They are the northernmost group in a region of the Pacific commonly referred to as Micronesia. Although the island of Guam is a part of the Mariana archipelago, it is

politically separated from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and is administered as an unincorporated territory of the United States. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' climate is marine tropical with distinct dry and wet seasons. Located in the primary storm track of the western Pacific, the archipelago routinely is affected by tropical storms and typhoons, the most powerful of which may pack winds of over 200 miles per hour. Large storms generate high winds and storm surge, which greatly impact vegetation, destroy buildings and structures, and reconfigure coastal environments.

The Commonwealth's population is concentrated on the main southern islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Saipan is by far the most populous and developed, with a total population of 48,220. The island is about 12 miles long and 5.5 miles wide and is the principal commercial center of the Northern Mariana Islands. The island also serves as the seat of the Commonwealth government. The CNMI is a bicameral legislature that includes the House of Representatives and the Senate. The House of Representatives comprises of 18 members for Saipan, 1 for Rota, and 1 for Tinian. The Senate consists of 9 Senators, with 3 seats each for Saipan, Rota, and Tinian.

In Saipan you will find a balanced mix of beautiful nature with modern hotels, nightlife, and shopping. Garapan is the main tourist district, with the most restaurants, bars, and shopping centers. In Saipan you will find beautiful white sandy beaches with crystal clear water and pure, fresh air. Some popular sites on the island include Forbidden Island, known for its stunning views, great snorkeling, hidden pools, and cave; Banzai Cliff and Suicide Cliff, where hundreds of Japanese civilians and soldiers jumped to their deaths near the end of WWII, rather than to surrender to American Troops; The Grotto, a unique diving spot with a collapsed limestone cavern and pool of cobalt-blue seawater filled by three underwater passageways; Bird Island, a small rock formation at the northern point of Saipan, with astounding views and home to thousands of birds; and Kalabera Cave, a cave located in the northern tip of Saipan where Ancient Chamorros used to live. You can still see very faint drawings on the left side just inside the cave opening. The cave has a large opening and a high roof. It slopes downward and is usually slippery. Not too far inside is a very deep hole. During WWII, Japanese soldiers used the cave as a field hospital.

Annual festivities on the island of Saipan include the Flame Tree Arts festival, weekly Street Market, Marianas March against Cancer, Taste of the Marianas, Liberation Day Carnival and Parade, village Fiestas, Tagaman Triathlon, and more. The Flame Tree Arts Festival celebrates the rich art and cultural heritage of the Commonwealth and takes place usually in late April during the blossoming of flame tree flowers after which the event was named. The annual festival features a wide selection of artwork from the CNMI, Guam, and other visiting artists. The event also showcases presentations by local and guest performing groups and musicians, art demonstrations, and an array of festival food favorites. The Taste of the Marianas is an event hosted by the Marianas Visitors Authority that brings together major hotels and food establishments for a one-month, weekly food festival and beer garden. The Marianas March Against Cancer is an annual event held in May that aims to promote cancer awareness and prevention, and raise much needed funds for patients with cancer in the CNMI. Cancer survivors, those who are still fighting cancer, as well as the general public participate in the 12-hour march from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am the next morning.

Tinian, lying only three miles south of Saipan, has a much smaller population, with a total population of 3,136 which occupies the southern one-third of the island. The northern two-thirds of Tinian are leased by the U.S. government and used for military training exercises. Tinian currently possesses little resort development, with the exception of a large casino that was built in 1999 called the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino. Each year Tinian celebrates fiestas and other festivities such as the San Jose Fiesta and the Pika Festival. Pika means hot or spicy in the Chamorro language. Tinian is famous for its hot pepper. The Tinian “Pika” Festival revolves around the “Donni Sali” (wild hot pepper), indigenous to the island. Tinian’s potent hot pepper has become popular and has been making its way to different parts of the world as more tourists bring them back to their home countries. There is a variety of marine life and coral reefs surrounding the island. Tinian’s clear, warm waters are ideal for snorkeling, scuba diving and sport fishing. The House of Taga (*Guma' Taga*) is an archeological site located near San Jose Village on the island of Tinian. The site is the location of a series of prehistoric latte stone pillars which were quarried about 4,000 feet (1,200 m) south of the site, only one of which is left standing erect due to past earthquakes.

The name is derived from a mythological chief named Taga', who is said to have erected the pillars as a foundation for his own house. The prehistoric latte stone pillars (also called Taga' stones) at House of Taga' stood 15 feet (4.6 m) high, and were quarried about 4,000 feet (1,200 m) south of the site. The original megaliths consisted of a base (haligi) and a hemispherical cap (tasa).

Rota is the southernmost island of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and is the second southernmost of the Marianas Archipelago. It lies approximately 40 nautical miles (74 km) north-northeast of the United States territory of Guam. Sinapalo village is the largest and most populated village followed by Songsong village. Rota has slightly less people than Tinian, with a total population of 2,527. This wasn't always the case. About a decade ago Rota outnumbered Tinian's population by nearly double. Due to economic downturn and lack of job opportunities, people were forced to look for work elsewhere. Rota has been called "Nature's Treasure Island" or the "Jewel of the Marianas" due to its remarkable island features and friendly gestures by its people. In the island of Rota people routinely wave at passer-byers even while driving. Warm smiles and nice hospitality are very common among the island's residents. Rota has many unique features such as its wedding-shaped mountain called the "Wedding Cake Mountain" and bright blue lagoon called the "Coral Garden". Locally grown sweet potatoes and other crops make Rota an ideal place to find fresh produce. Each year the island celebrates the "Gilita" Festival and the Bisita (Visit) Luta celebration. Due to Spanish influence, most of the residents in the CNMI are Catholic. Each island holds various fiesta celebrations each year in honor of their patron saint, but Rota holds some of the biggest celebrations with the San Francisco de Borja Fiesta held every October, and the San Isidro Fiesta held in March. Visitors from all over come and enjoy the daylong celebration in honor of the saints. Great local food and lots of entertainment makes each event in the CNMI special. Rota's blue lagoon, waterfalls, locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables, wildlife, and its friendly people makes the Island of Rota truly "Nature's Treasure Island."

The other islands in the southern arc are the small, terraced island of Aguiguan, situated 5 miles south of Tinian. Aguiguan is uninhabited, although there are plans for its commercial

development. Farallon de Mendinilla located 40 miles north of Saipan is leased to the military and is used as a target for aerial bombardment training.

To the north of Farallon de Mendinilla lie nine islands commonly referred to as the “Northern Islands”. These islands are geologically more recent and are volcanic in origin. Several possess active volcanoes. In general, they are small, rugged, and lack beaches. Flat land, developed reef systems, and protected anchorages are additional characteristics that greatly limit their development potential. Currently, only three of these islands- Agrigan, Alamagan and Anatahan- possess tiny communities of 20 people each. Long standing plans have been proposed to significantly expand infrastructure on several islands to accommodate a proposed government-sponsored homesteading program.

Size and Elevation Data for the Northern Mariana Islands

Island	Area in Square Miles	Peak Elevation in Feet
Rota	32.97	1591
Aguiguan	2.74	583
Tinian	39.29	580
Saipan	44.55	1551
Farallon de Mendinilla	.32	265
Anatahan	12.05	2582
Sariguan	1.92	1797
Guguan	1.49	987
Alamagan	4.29	2440
Pagan	18.24	1866
Agrigan	16.80	3162
Asuncion	2.82	2919
Maug	.82	744
Urracas	.98	1046

The indigenous residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Chamorros, are the descendants of the original settlers who successfully colonized the archipelago nearly 4,000 years ago. A second indigenous population, established in the mid-1800s, comprises the descendants of immigrants from the Central Caroline Islands, small atolls and islands which lay to the south of the Marianas archipelago between Chuuk and Yap. Due to rapid economic development and the resulting demand for outside labor, indigenous residents are now a minority population in the Commonwealth. Reflecting the multi-cultural make-up of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth Constitution established three official languages; English, Chamorro, and Carolinian. Official government business is conducted in the English language.

Although the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is tiny in terms of population and land area when compared to mainland jurisdictions, it is both culturally and ethnically diverse and physically spread out over thousands of square miles of ocean.

A Brief History

The Northern Mariana Islands possess a long and fascinating history. The islands were first settled approximately in 1800 BC by seafaring immigrants from the islands of Southeast Asia. These settlers, who are ancestors of the modern Chamorro people, constructed their villages and buried their dead throughout the islands, particularly in coastal beach areas on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Late in prehistoric times, Chamorros began building their houses atop stone pillars and caps, which are called latte. This distinctive and unique architectural form is now the most important cultural symbol of modern Chamorros. It was also during this time that most of the rugged islands to the north of Saipan were settled permanently as was the rugged, beach-less island of Aguiguan.

In the early sixteenth century, the islands were visited by Spanish explorers and, by the late 1500s; Rota became a repositioning stop for Spanish galleons carrying silver from New Spain to the trading center of Manila in the Philippines. A century and one half later, a Jesuit mission was established on nearby Guam. Within forty years, the priests had converted the

islanders to Catholicism, a process that led to the collapse of the traditional Chamorro social order and to the relocation of the surviving islanders into small mission villages. In spite of a tremendous drop in population and the imposition of western customs, the Chamorros were able to maintain their indigenous language.

For the next two hundred years, the Northern Marianas were administered as an isolated outpost in the Spanish colonial empire. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, immigrants from several small atolls and islands in the Central Carolines settled on Saipan and Tinian to escape their storm-ravaged homes. Their descendants, known as the Carolinians, now constitute the Commonwealth's second indigenous population.

Following the Spanish-American War, Germany purchased the Northern Marianas from Spain. The United States retained Guam, thus splitting the administration of the archipelago, a situation that has continued until the present. Germany concentrated on infrastructure and economic development during its fifteen-year rule of the Northern Marianas. Its administration was brought to an abrupt end at the outbreak of World War I when a Japanese naval squadron seized the Archipelago. Japan focused on commercial development and by the early 1930s; large sugar cane plantations and refining mills were operating on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. At the height of operations, the Northern Marianas produced tons of processed sugar, alcohol, and other products, which were shipped to markets in Japan. Japanese agriculture settlements were also established on several of the Northern Islands and Aguiguan, as well. In pursuing their development priorities, the Japanese cleared virtually all of the tillable land on Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Aguiguan and tens of thousands of Japanese and Okinawan agricultural and factory workers were brought in to meet the growing labor demands. By the late 1930s, the foreign population in the Marianas numbered more than 40,000, roughly ten times the size of the indigenous population. During this period, the Northern Marianas and its people were assimilated as integral parts of the Japanese empire.

Economic prosperity came to an end in 1941 with the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific. Airfields on Saipan were used during the Japanese attack on American-held Guam but it was not until early 1944 that the Japanese military began to fortify the islands in

anticipation of amphibious landings by American marines. Over the course of four months, hundreds of defensive positions were constructed and the islands were reinforced by over 40,000 Japanese combat troops. These efforts proved unsuccessful, however, and the islands fell to American troops in the summer of 1944 following weeks of bloody fighting which claimed thousands of Japanese and American casualties. After their capture, Saipan and Tinian were transformed into giant airbases needed for the strategic American bombing campaign against Japanese home islands. In addition to airfields, the Americans constructed harbors, road systems and supply bases needed to support the anticipated invasion of the Japanese home front. Lacking a good harbor, Rota was bypassed and its small Japanese garrison stranded. The costly Pacific war was brought to an abrupt end following the atomic bomb attacks launched from Tinian in the summer of 1945.

Following the war, the islands were administered by the Department of the Navy under a Trusteeship Agreement created by the United Nations. In the 1950s and early 1960s Saipan was used as a secret training base for Nationalist Chinese guerrillas, an operation reportedly directed by the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1962, military control over the Marianas District ended, and Saipan became the capital of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The Northern Marianas became one of the six districts administered by the Trust Territory government.

Later in the 1960s, Chamorros and Carolinians made their desires known regarding their future political status. Many people sought reunification with Guam and a referendum was held in 1969. Although the reunification objective was supported by a majority of Northern Marianas voters, the voters on Guam rejected it. Not wishing to remain part of Micronesia, and desiring close political association with the United States, a Northern Marianas political delegation began direct negotiations with the U.S. Government. These negotiations were undertaken to separate the Northern Marianas from the Trust Territory government and to establish a permanent political union with the United States. After several years of negotiations, a Covenant to establish a Commonwealth was approved by the Northern Marianas District Legislature in 1975. This document was also approved by both houses of the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Gerald Ford on March 24, 1976. The

Covenant created the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and provided residents with self-government and U.S. citizenship. Under this agreement, the Commonwealth is entitled to participate in a wide range of federal programs. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands benefits from substantial subsidies and development assistance from the federal government of the United States.

Shortly after attaining Commonwealth status, the Northern Marianas, particularly Saipan, became the focus of tourist related developments. Throughout the boom years of the 1980s and early 1990s, outside developers, initially from Japan, and later from Korea and China, leased thousands of hectares of public and private land and constructed a wide range of tourist-related facilities including resort hotels, golf courses and commercial buildings. To keep up with the rapidly expanding economy, the Commonwealth government expended millions of dollars on needed infrastructure such as roads, utilities, sewers, harbors and airports. During this relatively brief period, Saipan went from a quiet, rustic island of 14,000 to a heavily developed tourist destination with a population of nearly 69,221. This rapid development significantly increased economic prosperity and raised the local standard of living to a level unmatched in the islands' history. These advancements, however, were not achieved without significant costs.

After the 9/11 attacks, three major developments adversely affected the economy of the CNMI. From that day onwards, the exodus of the major garment manufacturing companies that were once a major source of the CNMI's revenue effected a short fall in the CNMI revenue. The garment factories, owned by foreign investors, relocated to other places in the globe. Then tourism, the second major source of revenue, suffered setbacks. It is worthy to note that in the past Saipan, Rota, and Tinian of the CNMI were favorite destinations of Japanese tourists. The weakening of the Japanese economy has affected the influx of tourists causing a marked decrease in island revenues. In November 2009, the federal takeover of the CNMI immigration and labor took place leading to the remaining foreign business investors leaving the Commonwealth and moving their businesses elsewhere. The event caused the majority of our citizens and nonresident workers to be jobless.

The CNMI Office on Aging understands the reality that emergencies and disasters occur when we least expect it. Not too long ago, the CNMI was hit by the most powerful Typhoon to hit U.S. soil. In 2018, Super Typhoon Yutu's strong winds overturned cars, knocked down hundreds of power poles, buildings were reduced to haphazard piles of tin and wood and many were rendered homeless and lived at emergency shelters for months. OoA Senior Centers in Saipan, Rota and Tinian were used as long-term shelters. The CNMI was better prepared for this typhoon because of our experiences with the previous storm, Super Typhoon Soudelor which devastated the CNMI just a few years before Yutu leaving many residents without shelter, power, and water for months.

Super Typhoon Yutu damaged many homes in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) which resulted in a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration on October 26, 2018.

To assist storm-impacted residents returning to or remaining in their homes while permanent repairs were completed, the Commonwealth and FEMA implemented a Temporary Emergency Tent and Roofing Installation Support (TETRIS) program. CNMI has been conducting assessments and tent installations throughout Saipan. This program is an expansion of the CNMI Tenting Program to include Saipan and Tinian with greater outreach and the inclusion of potential roofing repair. The TETRIS program uses technical specialists, FEMA funding, and manpower from our state and military partners. All four branches of our military family were represented. FEMA and the Commonwealth will reimburse our military for their expenses.

US Army Reservists and DFEMS personnel assisted with the Temporary Emergency Tent and Roofing Installation Support program implemented by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands government and FEMA in support of the CNMI's civil and local officials as part of the FEMA-supported Super Typhoon Yutu recovery efforts.

The CNMI government conducted its first official Yutu Relief effort with provisions by FEMA and American Red Cross Partners. With the help of federal partners, American Red

Cross and our law enforcement officials, spread over five stations on Saipan we were able to give out 10,500 meals and 16,000 liters of water.

The Department of Community & Cultural Affairs, Saipan Mayor's Office, along with military service members in coordination with the Office of the Governor continued debris removal throughout the villages. Debris removal includes green wastes, tin, lumber, and white goods.

The Northern Marianas, due to its geographical location, is open to nature-caused disasters that include typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. The CNMI Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM) through the Office of the Governor provides warnings when impending disasters are imminent. Warnings are given through weather bulletins, radio broadcasts, social media and cable television inserts.

Cognizant of the vulnerability of the elderly and people with disabilities whether the disaster is nature-caused or man-made, OoA has adopted a standard operation procedure manual to specifically assist the elderly and people with disabilities during emergencies including health-related incidents. The Office on Aging operates on the same emergency preparedness procedures as the other divisions under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA). Before a Typhoon, OoA personnel may be temporarily reassigned to assist at the OoA Emergency Short-Term Shelter. After the storm, OoA personnel may be reassigned to assist in recovery efforts. Some employees including SCSEP participants may be asked to assist the DCCA Assessment Team, the DCCA Cleanup Crew, or work as Shelter Managers/Workers.

Another challenge has presented itself to the CNMI. The novel corona virus (COVID-19) was first identified in Wuhan City in the Hubei Province of China in December 2019. There have been thousands of cases reported in Wuhan and other areas in China, and cases are being reported internationally including in the mainland US. Over 3,000 deaths have occurred, mostly in China. However, other countries are reporting increasing numbers of cases, notably Italy, South Korea, and Iran. This global crisis drastically impacted the economy in the

CNMI. The CNMI highly depends on tourism as a main source of income with most of our visitors coming from China, South Korea, and Japan. The cancellation of flights to and from China and the growing anxiety has taken a huge toll on our economy. As a result, the CNMI Government and other businesses are unable to hire new employees at this time. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and our ongoing recovery efforts, the Governor has placed our government under a State of Emergency. We are to observe austerity measures until further notice. This includes a hiring freeze, expenditure reduction, among other things. We are hopeful that things will start to look brighter in the near future.

Demographic Trends

The following is a comparison of the total population in the CNMI based on 2020 Census:

Total Population by Age	2020
55 to 59 years	3,374
60 to 64 years	2,489
65 to 69 years	1,434
70 to 74 years	767
75 years and over	<u>591</u>
Total	8,655

In 2010, the total population of the CNMI declined by 18%. The total number of senior citizens from age 60 and up increased by 18% which also comprises 5.8% of the total population in 2010. The overall decline of the CNMI population is caused primarily by the economic downturn that led to the dwindling of the tourism industry and the closure of the garment factories. The CNMI started to experience the downturn when the World Trade Organization lifted the restrictions to Chinese imports to the U.S. in 2005 that put the Commonwealth-based trade under pressure, leading to the closure of a number of garment factories. In addition, due to the U.S. imposed scheduled wage increases, the garment industry in the CNMI became extinct in 2009, which led to mass exodus of migrant workers that comprised majority of CNMI population. Due to economic hardships, many of our own indigenous people are forced to migrate to Guam and the U.S. mainland for better opportunities.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), affecting its economy, employment, healthcare system, and presenting various challenges.

Economy: CNMI heavily relies on tourism, and the pandemic led to a drastic decline in visitor arrivals, causing a severe blow to the tourism industry. Many businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments, experienced financial hardships and closures. The decline in tourism revenue resulted in a significant economic downturn and loss of government revenue.

Jobs and Employment: The tourism industry's downturn led to widespread job losses and unemployment. Many individuals, particularly those employed in the hospitality sector, faced layoffs, reduced work hours, or complete job loss. The decrease in job opportunities and income had a significant impact on the livelihoods of residents, leading to financial hardships and economic uncertainty.

Healthcare: Covid-19 posed a significant strain on CNMI's healthcare system. The islands' limited healthcare infrastructure faced challenges in managing and responding to the pandemic. The surge in Covid-19 cases necessitated the establishment of temporary medical facilities and increased demand for medical resources, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies. Healthcare professionals worked tirelessly to provide care and support to patients.

Challenges: The pandemic presented additional challenges to CNMI beyond the economic and healthcare impacts. Travel restrictions, lockdowns, and social distancing measures disrupted daily life and affected the social fabric of the community. Remote and isolated communities faced difficulties in accessing essential services and resources. Education systems had to adapt to remote learning, creating challenges for students, parents, and teachers. Mental health issues, such as increased stress, anxiety, and isolation, became prevalent due to the pandemic's ongoing effects.

Despite the challenges, CNMI implemented various measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. These included implementing strict travel restrictions, quarantine protocols, mass testing efforts, and vaccination campaigns. The government worked to provide economic assistance and support to affected individuals and businesses. Through collective efforts and resilience, CNMI continues to navigate the complexities of the pandemic, aiming to recover and rebuild its economy and safeguard the health and well-being of its residents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on seniors in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). As a vulnerable population, seniors have faced increased health risks and social isolation during these challenging times. Many older adults in the CNMI have experienced disruptions in their regular healthcare services, leading to

delayed or limited access to medical care. The need to adhere to strict safety measures, such as social distancing and self-isolation, has resulted in reduced social interactions, which can have detrimental effects on seniors' mental health and well-being. Additionally, the closure of community centers and senior activity programs has further contributed to feelings of loneliness and isolation among this population. The CNMI has implemented various measures to protect seniors, including prioritizing vaccination efforts and providing support services, but the impact of COVID-19 on seniors' physical and emotional well-being continues to be a concern. The senior centers in the CNMI had to be closed for several months until the Covid-19 Taskforce felt that it was safe to reopen leaving seniors bored, isolated and feeling helpless.

IV. Economic Projections & Impact

1. Long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

Long-term employment projections for seniors in the CNMI include jobs in tourism, administration, education, and cultural preservation. It is our focus to train our SCSEP participants well so that they may be able to acquire positions in these fields. With many foreign workers leaving the CNMI due to the expiration of their CW-1 visas, an increased number of jobs for local workers had been made available. Recently, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 560 which would grant permanent status to a small group of foreign workers who have been in the CNMI for 40 years. This is promising news for our islands as this will maintain an adequate number of skilled workers in our economy. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) faces a dynamic economic landscape, influenced by various factors such as tourism, construction, and other developments. As the CNMI continues to develop, long-term economic projections indicate potential shifts in industries and occupations that could offer employment opportunities for older workers.

In recent years, tourism has been a cornerstone of the CNMI economy, with the hospitality sector providing a significant source of employment. However, long-term projections suggest diversification and expansion in other industries such as healthcare, education, and technology. These sectors are anticipated to experience growth, driven by factors like an aging population, increasing healthcare needs, and the demand for skilled workers in emerging fields.

Specifically, healthcare is expected to see substantial expansion, offering employment opportunities for older workers in various roles, including healthcare aides, nurses, and administrative positions. Additionally, as the CNMI invests in education and technology infrastructure, there will likely be increased demand for educators, IT professionals, and support staff, providing avenues for older workers to contribute their expertise and skills.

Furthermore, infrastructure development projects and renewable energy initiatives are anticipated to create job opportunities in construction, maintenance, and sustainability-related fields. These sectors may offer employment options suitable for older workers with experience in construction trades and project management.

In summary, while tourism remains a vital component of the CNMI economy, long-term projections suggest diversification into industries such as healthcare, education, technology, and infrastructure development. These shifts offer promising employment prospects for older workers across various occupations, contributing to the overall economic growth and

sustainability of the CNMI.

Senior Citizen population in the CNMI (Census 2020 Report):

55+ Population in CNMI	
Saipan	5,144 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2,832 males• 2,312 females
Tinian	262 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 146 males• 116 females
Rota	316 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 174 males• 142 females

SCSEP participants benefit from training they receive at community service assignments like senior centers, governmental offices, hospitals, schools and libraries. Over the course of this four-year plan, SCSEP grantees will continue to build and maintain relationships with host agencies and other partners in the high growth fields identified above.

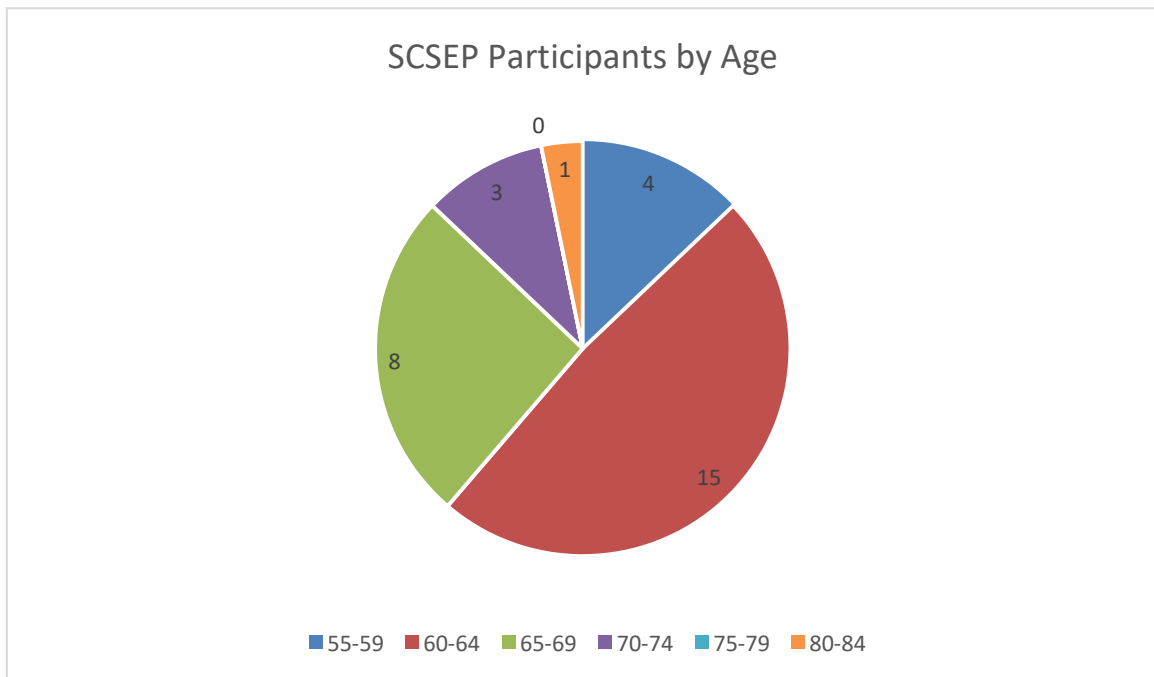
SCSEP participants have access to free training on a variety of topics including computers, reading and math skills. Host agency sites offer participants the chance to become familiar with common office equipment and procedures such as word processing software, computer-based scheduling programs, email etiquette and customer service skills. SCSEP participants are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to enhance their competitive edge in today’s highly competitive job market.

The CNMI SCSEP also focuses on jobs related to cultural preservation since many SCSEP participants are culturally diverse and experienced especially in the indigenous languages,

customs, and practices. Interested SCSEP participants can be trained to become translators, teacher aides, artists, and other related jobs in the education and tourism sector.

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

The CNMI has seen a steady increase of older workers in the past 20 years. Many of whom have been pushed to work past the traditional retirement age of 65. At least half of the current participants in the CNMI SCSEP are 65 years and older.



SCSEP participants have access to 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 today's highly competitive job market.

In the 2020 Census, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands reported that workers age 55 and older were employed in the following industries that are more likely to employ older workers:

Long-term Projections for Jobs in Growth Industries and Occupations that may provide Employment Opportunities for Older Workers		How Long-Term Projections Relate to the Types of Unsubsidized Jobs for Which SCSEP Participants Will be Trained and the Type of Skill Training to be Provided	
Industries Most Likely to Employ Older Workers	Percentage of Older Workers in this field	Jobs for Which SCSEP Participants Will be Trained	Type of Skills Training to be Provided
Accommodation & Food Services	13.83%	Wait staff Cashier Front Desk Clerk Cook Assistant	Food Handler Training Customer Service Communication Skills Problem Solving Cash Register Training CPR First Aid
Other Services, Except Public Administration	12.93%	Office Clerks Administrative Assistants Customer Service	Microsoft Word Microsoft Excel Internet Search Communication Skills Organizational Skills Filing Copying Typing
Construction	12.86%	Maintenance Worker Carpentry	First Aid Proper Lifting Safety Training Equipment Training
Retail Trade	8.30%	Cashier Stocker	Customer Service Communication Skills Problem Solving Cash Register Training Proper Lifting
Public Administration	8.24%	Office Clerks Administrative Assistants Customer Service	Microsoft Word Microsoft Excel Internet Search Communication Skills Organizational Skills Filing Copying Typing
Educational Services	7.79%	Tutors Teacher's Aide	English as a Second Language Computer Skills

			Interpersonal Skills Communication Skills Organizational Skills Filing Copying Typing CPR First Aid
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

The long-term job projections included in the economic analysis section of the strategic plan for the CNMI Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is vital in aligning the training and employment opportunities for the program’s participants, who are part of the growing older population. Here's a detailed discussion on how the CNMI SCSEP plans to address these issues:

1. Alignment with Long-Term Job Projections: The CNMI SCSEP closely examines economic analysis to identify industries and sectors where job growth is expected. This is crucial because the program aims to train participants in job skills that are in demand, thereby enhancing their employability. For example, as tourism is a significant industry in CNMI, positions such as Front Desk Clerk, Cook Assistant, and Customer Service Representatives are likely to be in demand. Training in these areas not only aligns with economic projections but also with the practical needs and abilities of older adults.

2. Addressing the Needs of a Growing Older Population: CNMI SCSEP is tailored to address the unique challenges faced by an aging workforce. Recognizing that older workers may have physical limitations or health challenges, the program focuses on skills training for less physically demanding roles. Training for positions such as Administrative Assistance, Office Clerks, and Light Maintenance Workers are provided, ensuring these jobs match the physical capabilities of older adults, thereby enhancing their workforce participation and reducing age-related employment barriers.

3. Serving Prospective Employers and Older Workers: The program engages with local businesses and industries to ensure a mutual understanding of the benefits of employing older workers. By focusing on roles like Wait Staff, Cashier, and other service-oriented positions, SCSEP helps businesses understand how older workers can contribute effectively, particularly in roles requiring maturity, reliability, and interpersonal skills. Training provided by SCSEP includes not only job-specific skills but also soft skills like customer service and problem-solving, which are highly valued in these industries.

4. Employer Engagement Strategy: CNMI SCSEP actively seeks to create partnerships with local employers who have positions suitable for seniors. This involves regular outreach, participation in local business events,

and collaboration with chambers of commerce and industry groups. The program promotes the benefits of hiring older workers, emphasizing attributes such as experience, reliability, and a strong work ethic.

5. Jobs Catering to Seniors' Needs: Recognizing that seniors may prefer or excel in certain job types due to physical limitations or preferences, CNMI SCSEP ensures that the training provided directly correlates with these roles. The job types listed, such as Light Maintenance Worker or Administrative Assistance, are selected because they can be adapted to meet the ergonomic needs of older workers, such as adjustable workstations, flexible work hours, and tasks that do not require heavy lifting.

6. Continuous Adaptation and Feedback: To ensure that the SCSEP remains aligned with both the job market and the needs of older workers, continuous feedback from participants and employers is incorporated into the program's strategy. This helps in adapting training programs to better suit the changing dynamics of the job market and the physical abilities of seniors.

Through these strategies, CNMI SCSEP aims to enhance the employability of older workers while meeting the needs of local employers, thus addressing both economic and social objectives effectively. By focusing on sustainable employment opportunities and continuous skill development, the program ensures that older workers remain a vital part of CNMI's economy.

3. Current and Projected Employment Opportunities (20 CFR 641.325(c)).

Workers age 55 and older make up approximately 12% of the CNMI's total workforce. Popular and growing jobs for senior citizens are those in office administration, construction and maintenance, business, education, and so forth. It is projected that in the next few years there will be an influx of job vacancies in the areas of healthcare, construction and maintenance, personal care, sales, food preparation and serving, and more, due to the transitioning of foreign workers out of the CNMI. U.S. workers will be expected to fill the void in these occupations. These projections are encouraging for the CNMI SCSEP because many of the sectors with high projected openings align with the skills and occupations held by many older workers.

The following is data compiled from the 2010 U.S. Census statistics for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands indicating the total number of senior citizens in a current occupation.

Demand Driven Jobs for Senior Citizens in the CNMI

Occupation	Total	Seniors 55 yrs. +	% Rate
Management occupations	2,120	458	21.6
Construction and extraction occupations	1,709	339	19.8
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	2,500	402	16.1
Installation, maintenance, and repair	1,557	203	13.0

occupations			
Business and financial operations	1,235	134	10.9
occupations			
Education, training, and library	1,351	138	10.2
occupations			
Office and administrative support	2,877	245	8.5
occupations			
Food preparation and serving	2,184	160	7.3
related occupations			
Sales and related occupations	2,147	151	7.0
Protective service occupations	1,318	67	5.1

Many SCSEP applicants have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time and they may lack the computer skills demanded by many employers. The CNMI SCSEP provides basic and advanced computer skills training to all participants, depending on their needs, helping them develop the necessary skills to secure meaningful employment. Basic computer skills courses include general computer skills and Windows basics. Participants may advance to learn intermediate skills in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

To ensure that community service assignments provide training that meets the needs of participants, all SCSEP participants complete a skills assessment survey and develops an Individual Employment Plan in order to find a job opening that most closely matches the participant’s skills and preferences. Once a participant has indicated the type of job they wish to train for, SCSEP staff searches for a community service assignment that offers appropriate training to the participant.

V. Service Delivery and Coordination

1. A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs:

A. Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA Title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e)).

The CNMI SCSEP works with WIOA to identify potential employment opportunities for its participants. The CNMI SCSEP will continue to nurture its partnership with WIOA to expand additional services for its participants. An official memorandum of agreement will be formulated detailing the specific intent of the partnership and the role each program will have in assisting the SCSEP participant to prepare and obtain unsubsidized employment. There is no current one-stop delivery system for the CNMI WIOA, however the universal website for the U.S. Department of Labor's Career One Stop Center is available to participants online at www.careeronestop.org.

The CNMI SCSEP will create an individual employment plan for each participant that will be updated semi-annually. The CNMI SCSEP will work with WIOA to offer additional job-related trainings and workshops to better prepare participants for employment such as: assistance with resume writing, filling out applications, job interview tips, and more. SCSEP participants are encouraged to visit the WIOA website regularly for job vacancy announcements.

B. Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities to be carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h)).

The CNMI SCSEP works alongside OAA programs to provide better services to our senior participants. SCSEP participants are encouraged to attend workshops and lectures regarding health and wellness, disease prevention, and more. They can also avail of trainings and discussions on elder abuse and neglect prevention. Transportation services are also available for participants who need to attend interviews or get to their job placements. Other programs such as nutrition support and caregiver services are also available as needed. Coordinating the activities of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) grantees with other initiatives under the Older Americans Act (OAA) in the Commonwealth of the Northern

Mariana Islands (CNMI) is vital for ensuring comprehensive support and services for older individuals.

One key action is to establish robust communication channels and collaboration frameworks among SCSEP grantees and organizations implementing programs under other titles of the OAA. This facilitates the sharing of resources, best practices, and client referrals, creating a seamless continuum of care and support for older adults in the CNMI.

Additionally, aligning the objectives and activities of SCSEP with those of other OAA titles, such as nutrition programs, caregiver support services, and elder abuse prevention, can enhance the impact and effectiveness of interventions. By integrating SCSEP activities with broader OAA initiatives, older individuals can access a suite of services addressing various aspects of their well-being and quality of life.

Furthermore, leveraging partnerships with community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and government agencies involved in OAA programs enables SCSEP grantees to tap into existing networks and resources, amplifying their reach and impact. These partnerships facilitate the identification of shared priorities and opportunities for collaboration, ultimately enhancing the delivery of services to older adults in the CNMI.

In summary, coordinating the activities of SCSEP grantees with initiatives under other titles of the OAA in the CNMI is essential for maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of services for older individuals. By fostering collaboration, alignment, and partnerships, the CNMI can create a comprehensive support system that addresses the diverse needs of its aging population, promoting their well-being and independence.

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

CNMI SCSEP works with government programs such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and Carolinians Affairs Office to provide additional resources for participants with unique needs. OVR provides individualized services that assist people with disabilities find and keep a job. The CNMI COTA program provides assisted transportation for those with disabilities and the elderly. Seniors who wish to avail of this program after working hours and on weekends are encouraged to do so. These programs may also refer eligible seniors to the SCSEP program. The CNMI SCSEP works with private radio stations and cable television to promote its program and to encourage seniors with poor employment prospects to apply. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in the CNMI recognizes the importance of coordinating with various private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans. By fostering collaboration with community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and initiatives for individuals with special needs or disabilities, SCSEP aims to enhance support for older adults in the CNMI.

One key action involves establishing partnerships with community and faith-based organizations that serve older individuals. These organizations often have existing relationships and trust within the community, making them valuable allies in reaching and assisting older adults who may benefit from SCSEP services. By coordinating efforts, SCSEP can leverage the resources and outreach networks of these organizations to identify and support eligible participants.

Moreover, collaborating with transportation programs is essential for ensuring that older adults can access SCSEP activities and services. By working with local transportation providers and agencies, SCSEP can address mobility barriers and facilitate transportation options for participants, enabling them to attend training sessions, community service placements, and other program-related activities.

Additionally, coordinating with programs tailored to individuals with special needs or disabilities is crucial for ensuring inclusivity and accessibility within SCSEP. By aligning with initiatives that provide specialized support and accommodations, SCSEP can better serve older adults with diverse needs and abilities, offering tailored assistance and accommodations as necessary.

Overall, by actively coordinating with various private and public entities and programs serving older Americans in the CNMI, SCSEP enhances its capacity to reach, support, and empower older adults in the community. Through collaboration and partnership, SCSEP aims to create a comprehensive support network that addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by older individuals, ultimately promoting their well-being, independence, and economic empowerment.

D. Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j)).

SCSEP services are maximized when partnerships are developed with other job training initiatives that may be available in the CNMI. Some current actions to coordinate SCSEP with labor market and job training initiatives are as follows:

1. Acquiring labor market statistics,
2. Acquiring job growth industries and occupations,
3. Acquiring employment projections,
4. Training and employment referrals,
5. Collaborative meetings on potential training programs, and
6. Co-enrollments in training activities.

The CNMI SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program) utilizes the Government Performance and Monitoring System (GPMS) as a framework for monitoring and evaluating its performance. The CNMI SCSEP is a federally funded program aimed at providing job training and placement assistance to low-income individuals aged 55 and older in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

GPMS provides a structured approach to tracking key performance indicators and outcomes of the CNMI SCSEP. These indicators may include metrics such as job placement rates, skill development, earnings improvement, and participant satisfaction. By utilizing GPMS, the CNMI SCSEP aims to ensure accountability, measure program effectiveness, and make data-driven decisions to improve services for its participants.

Regular monitoring and evaluation through GPMS allow the CNMI SCSEP to identify areas of success and areas needing improvement. This data-driven approach enables program administrators to allocate resources effectively, adapt strategies to better meet the needs of participants, and ensure that taxpayer funds are being utilized efficiently.

Overall, the CNMI SCSEP's utilization of GPMS enhances its ability to fulfill its mission of providing valuable employment opportunities and support to older adults in the CNMI, ultimately contributing to their economic well-being and overall quality of life.

To enhance the effectiveness and reach of the CNMI SCSEP, concerted efforts are undertaken to coordinate its activities with other labor market and job training initiatives in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This coordination involves establishing partnerships with local government agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and private sector entities involved in workforce development.

Through these partnerships, the CNMI SCSEP can leverage resources, share best practices, and streamline services to ensure a more comprehensive and seamless approach to addressing the employment needs of older adults. By aligning with other initiatives, the CNMI SCSEP can maximize its impact, broaden access to training opportunities, and facilitate smoother transitions for participants into sustainable employment, thereby contributing to the overall economic prosperity of the CNMI community.

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

There is no current full-service one-stop delivery system in the CNMI, except for the universal service provided by WIOA through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Career One Stop website.

SCSEP participants are encouraged to visit the WIOA and DOL websites frequently to view job vacancy announcements and other materials available to job seekers. SCSEP will invite WIOA to its quarterly meetings to assist participants with any inquiries.

F. Efforts the State will make to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

The CNMI is 100% rural, and the SCSEP will work to network with the WIOA, the Department of Labor, and other state offices to better enhance the programs offered to eligible seniors.

2. The state’s long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)).

The CNMI SCSEP maintains relationships with the employers in their service area. They continuously seek new host agencies and potential employers in their communities as resources for SCSEP participants. CNMI SCSEP maintains strong relationships with local employers to enhance collaboration with workforce partners and promote employment opportunities for older workers.

The CNMI SCSEP aims at strategically capitalizing on partnerships with various organizations/partner agencies and stakeholders. The program approach involves actively creating a realistic career trajectory for participants with reasonable accommodations for the

senior population to successfully establish themselves in the local workforce. In addition, the CNMI SCSEP includes effective methods to overcome barriers or challenges that may hinder the participants from obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment opportunities. The following are strategies of the CNMI SCSEP:

- CNMI SCSEP will improve existing partnerships and integrate new partnerships with employers. It will identify workforce agencies that are willing to provide training, host community service assignments, and engage in information sharing pertinent to job trends and openings that will help identify current and future job openings. New partnerships will be formulated with newly installed or interested organizations/agencies.
- CNMI SCSEP will contact potential employers to explain the program and discuss possible placement services and unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants. Information such as employment opportunities, benefit packages and job description will be compiled for each employer for job matching purposes. The employer will also be offered the opportunity to take advantage of SCSEP as a host agency and/or work with the SCSEP for any possible input in the program. As part of the partnership with employers, the SCSEP will establish communication with employers to streamline information on job openings, status of existing placement and promote goodwill partnership and future job prospects.
- CNMI SCSEP will disseminate program information via media outlets (radio stations, television, website, and newspapers) and utilize available resources to identify job opportunities for the program participants. CNMI SCSEP will develop job leads in the public and private sectors by attending job fairs, advertising, responding to newspaper ads, internet, local radio and television networks, contacting employers by phone, visiting employers, sending out letters and speaking at local business meetings.
- CNMI SCSEP will establish working agreements with various government agencies, semi-government, and non-profit organizations. SCSEP will involve government agencies in developing advocacy for senior citizen placement in job areas where they can productively contribute their expertise and knowledge. The identified government, semi-

government agencies and non-profit organizations the program will be networking with are, but not limited to the following: CNMI Department of Labor/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Veterans Affairs Office, CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities, Department of Public Health, Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI), Marianas Visitors Authority, Department of Public Works, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Northern Marianas College (NMC-CREES), Department of Community & Cultural Affairs (DCCA), CNMI Governor’s Office, Office of the Mayor of Saipan, Office of the Mayor of Tinian, and the Office of the Mayor of Rota.

- CNMI SCSEP will connect with business leaders. The SCSEP Project Coordinator will be tasked to actively advocate for employment opportunities in business meetings/events for business groups such as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Association of the Northern Marianas, and other small business entities. The goal is to entice private businesses to hire SCSEP participants.

3. Describe the long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))

Population by Ethnic Origin or Race:	
Chamorro:	12,902
Carolinian:	2,461
Other Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander:	3,437
Chinese(Except Taiwanese)	3,659
Filipino	19,017
Korean	2,253
Other Asian	1,979
Caucasian	1,117
Black/African American	55
Hispanic/Latino	54

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

For the purpose of this plan, we look at the Chamorro population as the majority and other ethnic groups will constitute the minority population.

Below is a list of current minority participants in the CNMI SCSEP:

Filipino – 2

Carolinian - 3

Palauan (Other P.I.) - 5

Of the total 31 positions in the CNMI SCSEP, 10 are filled by minority participants. CNMI SCSEP conducts outreach to assure that eligible individuals, including minorities, are aware of SCSEP and have opportunities to participate in the program. We continue to do this through media outlets such as television, radio, internet, print ads, yearly public hearings, and word of mouth.

4. Provide a list of community services needed and the exact places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location(s) of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

Community Services Needed	Places Where These Services are Most Needed
Office Support	Senior Centers Government Offices
Community & Social Services	Youth Centers Senior Centers
	Mayor’s Offices
Education, Training & Library	Public Schools Public Libraries
Construction & Ground Maintenance	Government Offices Schools

5. Describe the long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program.

This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k)).

The primary goal of the CNMI SCSEP is to offer community service training to qualified elders for a period no longer than 48 months, after which, unsubsidized employment should be identified. In order to meet its goals, the CNMI SCSEP has established the following:

- Proper and thorough orientation of SCSEP participants. Participant must be provided orientation, including information on project goals and objectives, community service assignments, training opportunities, available supportive services, participant rights and responsibilities, and so forth. Orientation is a vital service which ensures that all program participants have a complete understanding of the level of commitment required and their role in meeting the requirements and expectations of the program.
- Initial assessment. Program participants will be assessed on their work history, skills and interests, talents, physical capabilities, aptitudes, needs for supportive services, occupational preferences, training needs, potential for performing community service assignments, and potential for transition to unsubsidized employment. This will create a better picture for participants and how to successfully work with them while in the program.
- Creation of Individual Employment Plan and re-evaluation of IEP every 6 months. IEP's are meant to provide a clear path for how services will be provided to assist participants in gaining unsubsidized employment. IEP's will also be re-evaluated every 6 months or as needed to make any changes or updates to their employment goals.

- Appropriate community service assignment. Based on the assessment and IEP of each participant, they will be placed in an appropriate community service assignment where they can acquire useful skills to gain unsubsidized employment. Participants with transportation difficulties may request a work assignment near their home or work with the Office on Aging to identify reasonable transportation services.

6. Describe a strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f)).

CNMI SCSEP strives to help participants find appropriate unsubsidized employment before the end of their 48-month individual durational limit. The employment goal for CNMI SCSEP PY 2020 was 30% and the actual current is at 14%. To ensure that we achieve the employment goal in future program years, the CNMI SCSEP will focus on engaging potential employers and helping participants tailor and effectively market their skills.

A team effort is required by SCSEP staff, participants, and host agencies to ensure the successful placement of participants in unsubsidized employment. The CNMI SCSEP has established the following to meet this goal:

- Quarterly participant meetings. These meetings are to provide updates to participants as well as receive any feedback. Participants will be reminded of the goals of the program, including active seeking of unsubsidized employment and compliance with the allowed 20 CS hours per pay period.
- Quarterly host agency meetings. These meetings are to receive any feedback and inform host agencies of any updates or changes to the program. It is also a way to measure the progress of securing unsubsidized employment for their respective participant. Host agencies must submit their intent to hire every 6 months. Should the host agency fail to hire the SCSEP participant or decide they are unable to do so in the future; the participant will be withdrawn and placed at another host site. Host agencies should understand that the ultimate goal of the program is unsubsidized placement and that the training they provide will help participants achieve that goal.

- Yearly survey for program participants. An annual survey will be given to each participant to receive feedback and evaluate the training they have received from their host agency. Should a participant feel unsatisfied with their training or employment plan at any time, they may request a transfer to another host agency or revision to their IEP.
- Partnership with WIOA. Participants will be encouraged to visit the WIOA website on a regular basis and make use of their one-stop career program website. SCSEP and WIOA will partner to offer trainings and workshops relevant to active job seekers.
- Assistance with resume writing, interview etiquette, and more. Office on Aging staff and WIOA will work together to offer these services for interested SCSEP participants.

VI. Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution.

1. A Description of the Localities and Populations for which Projects of the Type Authorized by Title V are most Needed (20 CFR 641.325 (d)).

The program serves unemployed, low-income (no greater than 125% of the Federal Poverty Level) older workers (55 and older) who reside in the CNMI with 1 senior center on each of the islands: Saipan, Tinian and Rota. SCSEP participants are given community service type positions at SCSEP Host Agencies with the goal of acquiring the skills needed to transition participants to unsubsidized employment. SCSEP participants work an average of 20 hours a week and get paid the federal minimum wage. Upon entering, participants are given an individual employment plan which is updated semi-annually.

In PY 2020, 100% of CNMI SCSEP participants had income at or below the poverty level, 52% received public assistance, 100% lived in rural locations and 3% experienced a disability. To address the needs of these populations, CNMI SCSEP will continue to collaborate with agencies such as the Office on Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Affairs and the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. in addition to private socialservices programs.

Information from the most recent U.S. Census in 2020 provides the following information on employment and unemployment status of civilians in the CNMI. The CNMI SCSEP uses this data to identify the localities and populations in most need of SCSEP assistance.

Location	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed
<i>CNMI</i>	21,827	18,759	3,068
Saipan	18,009	15,816	2,193
Tinian	2,215	1,752	463
Rota	1,603	1,191	412

Of the total number of employed persons in the CNMI, 2,877 are senior citizens age 55 years and older.

Poverty Status in 2020 by Ethnic Origin or Race

Ethnic Origin	Total	Below Poverty Level	% Rate
Chamorro	3,237	1,023	31.6
Carolinian	576	291	50.5
Other Pacific Islander	722	436	60.4
Chinese (Except Taiwanese)	577	359	62.2
Filipino	3,419	1,979	57.9
Korean	590	173	29.3
Other Asian	373	145	38.9
Other Race	483	51	10.6

Based on the above information, the locality with the highest unemployment rate is Saipan, accounting for 92.6% of the entire unemployment rate in the CNMI. The ethnicity with the most persons in poverty are the Filipinos, followed by Chamorros, and other Pacific Islanders.

2. List the cities and counties where the SCSEP project will take place. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate if and where the positions changed from the prior year.

Location	Number of Authorized Positions	Prior Year
Saipan	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Tech. Trainee –9 • Elder Assistance Trainee – 2 • Front Desk Trainee – 5 • Bus Driver Trainee – 1 • Groundskeeper Trainee – 1 • Custodial Worker Trainee- 1 	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Tech. Trainee – 8 • Agriculturist Trainee – 3 • Front Desk Trainee – 2 • Bus Driver Trainee – 3 • Groundskeeper Trainee – 1 • Office Admin Trainee – 1 • Food Service Trainee - 1
Tinian	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envir. Tech. Trainee – 1 • Front Desk Trainee- 2 • Elder Assistance Trainee- 1 • Grounds Keeper Trainee- 2 	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envir. Tech. Trainee – 3 • Front Desk Trainee- 3
Rota	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envir. Tech. Trainee – 4 • Front Desk Trainee – 1 • Elder Assistance Trainee- 1 	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envir. Tech. Trainee – 5 • Front Desk Trainee - 1

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

CNMI SCSEP has a total of 31 slots available for participants. Saipan has 19, Tinian has 6, and Rota has 6. Based on the most recent census report on population, the CNMI SCSEP is comfortable with the number of slots provided per location.

4. Explain the State’s long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

A. Moves positions from overserved to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.

The CNMI SCSEP is allotted 31 slots for participants. These slots are divided amongst the 3 main inhabited islands of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Saipan, Rota, and Tinian and is based on population. According to the 2020 Census Report, Saipan, being the most populous, receives a total of 19 slots. Rota and Tinian each get 6 slots per island.

There are 5,144 adults residing on the island of Saipan who are 55 years and older, 316 on Rota, and 262 on Tinian. Based on this data, the CNMI SCSEP feels that there is no one location that is overserved or underserved and that the number of positions per location is appropriate at this time.

B. Equitably serves both rural and urban areas.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a small island community, is considered to be 100% rural.

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

CNMI SCSEP continues to ensure that in selecting eligible individuals for participation, priority is given to individuals who have one or more of the following characteristics:

- (1) Are 65 years of age or older;
- (2) Have a disability;
- (3) Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills;
- (4) Reside in a rural area;
- (5) Are veterans (or, in some cases, spouses of veterans);
- (6) Have low employment prospects;
- (7) Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the One-Stop delivery system;
- (8) Are homeless or are at risk for homelessness; or
- (9) Formerly incarcerated individuals.

The stipulated priorities are applied in the following order:

- (1) Persons who qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 38 U.S.C. 4215(a), and who possess at least one of the other priority characteristics;
- (2) Persons who qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 38 U.S.C. 4215(a), who do not possess any other of the priority characteristics;
- (3) Persons who do not qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act (nonveterans), and is homeless or at risk for homelessness;
- (4) Persons who do not qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act (nonveterans), and who possess at least one of the other priority characteristics.

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

Based on the most recent census, Saipan has a total population of 43,385, of which 5,144 are over the age of 55. Tinian has a total population of 2,044, of which 262 are over the age of 55. Rota has a total population of 1,893, of which 316 are over the age of 55.

6. Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

Reside in urban and rural areas within the State, have the greatest economic need, are minorities, are limited English proficient, have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

CNMI SCSEP strives to ensure that positions are well distributed so that all eligible populations and target groups are properly served. The CNMI is 100% rural.

Relative Distribution of Individuals Residing in Rural Areas	
Location	55+ Population
Saipan	5,144
Tinian	262
Rota	316

Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who have the greatest economic need.

Based on the 2020 U.S. Census for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, there are an estimated 1,564 older adults who have poverty status, 502 of which fall below the poverty level, or 32.1%. The CNMI Office on Aging assists Active, Homebound, and SCSEP participants on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian. The total number of clients we serve who are at or below the poverty level is 379 or 24.2%.

Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who are limited English proficient.

The CNMI is home to an array of cultures, each with their own distinct language. The primary language is English; however older adults will usually speak their native languages ranging from Chamorro, Carolinian, Chuukese, Palauan, Filipino, Chinese, and more.

Languages Spoken at Home by Adults 55 Years and Older	
English Only	560
Chamorro	1915
Other Pacific Island Languages	574
Filipino	2022
Other Asian Languages	581
Carolinian	70

Source: U.S. Census, CNMI, 2020

Of the total clients the Office on Aging serves on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian, 75% have limited English proficiency.

Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who have the greatest social need.

The CNMI is a tiny island community where there is no geographic isolation on any of the three main islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Language barriers do exist in the older adult population, with 90.2% of older adults with a primary language other than English.

According to U.S. Census results for the CNMI, there are approximately 595 adults over the age of 65 with a mental or physical disability. Of these, 267 are male and 328 are female.

The CNMI Office on Aging assists older adults with disabilities. Roughly 60% of the total population have some sort of disability.

The Office on Aging assists older persons with disabilities by providing 1 free meal each weekday excluding holidays, providing access assistance in applying for social services (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, Food Stamps, Housing Assistance, and more), counseling, information services, and transportation services for active clients. Caregivers for homebound clients are eligible for additional services under the National Family Caregiver Support Program. Routine checks are done by Office on Aging staff for data collection and monitoring of possible signs of elder abuse or neglect. Older adults with language barriers are afforded interpreters.

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

In order to avoid service disruptions, participants are given both verbal and written notifications regarding how any changes will impact them and the steps they must take to avoid service interruption. Primary consideration is given to participants by working closely with them about administrative decisions. Unsubsidized employment is the optimum method for avoiding disruptions to participants enrolled in the program and this policy is applied to the greatest extent possible. Training opportunities will be assigned based on participants' IEP's and outlook for eventual unsubsidized employment. Host agencies are required to submit their intent to hire every 6 months. Should the host agency be unable to hire, the participant will be moved to another host site with a better probability of acquiring unsubsidized employment.

The following steps will be taken to comply with the statutory requirement to avoid disruption of services to SCSEP participants:

- Service gaps will be addressed through attrition, which could be through unsubsidized employment, self-withdrawal from the program, illness, or death.

- Participants cannot be arbitrarily terminated from the program to address a decrease in county or state authorized positions.



Thank you!

Helping Seniors get back in the workforce!

