



# Participant Advisory Councils

Best Practices Presentation  
for the  
Workforce Innovations/SCSEP Conference

Presented by:  
Easter Seals, Inc.

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## Participant Advisory Council (PAC)

- Easter Seals SCSEP has instituted an innovative **service delivery model** to monitor and enhance the administration and design of program services by fostering direct participant feedback and involvement.



## **Participant Advisory Council (PAC)**

- This involvement is characterized by active participation on a Participant Advisory Council (PAC) instituted at every Easter Seals SCSEP project site (total of eleven PACs).



## **PAC Mission Statement**

- The Easter Seals' SCSEP Participant Advisory Council seeks to improve and expand the services provided through the Easter Seals Senior Community Service Employment Program, including enhancing employment opportunities for senior citizens, through a forum of open exchange of ideas, leadership, guidance, education and feedback from council members to SCSEP project administrators.



## **Functions of the PAC**

- (1) Become familiar with the diverse population served by Easter Seals and the training and employment process expected through SCSEP.



## Functions of the PAC

- (2) Provide relevant information and resources to other SCSEP participants and potential employers including information on:
- Technical assistance available (i.e. training programs, supports, etc.)
  - SCSEP rules and regulations
  - Why hiring seniors is a good idea
  - On the Job Employment (OJE) opportunities
  - Available services and service providers in the community
  - Incentives
  - Age and disability awareness and education



## **Functions of the PAC**

- (3) Identify and prioritize the employment needs of the private and public sectors of the senior and employer communities.



## **Functions of the PAC**

- (4) Assist in the development, implementation and monitoring of pragmatic training programs:
- Provided through Easter Seals
  - Provided through the employer
  - Provided through other agencies (such as WIA programs)



## Functions of the PAC

- (5) Encourage SCSEP participants to provide leadership and assume greater personal responsibility for their own training and employment program through their Individual Employment Plans (IEPs).



## Functions of the PAC

- (6) Help to develop an effective Public Relations Campaign to promote the SCSEP project.



## **Functions of the PAC**

- (7) Develop a short-term and long-range plan for the project to meet the goals and expectations of the Department of Labor.



## Functions of the PAC

- (8) Assist, when possible, in exploring alternate funding resources.
  - (i.e.; private, federal, state, or local.)



## **Functions of the PAC**

- (9) Identify training programs and job opportunities available for seniors within the local public and private sectors in the local labor market and other resources in the community that would enhance the career path of SCSEP participants.



## **Functions of the PAC**

- (10) Create an arena for open dialogue addressing SCSEP participant and/or employer concerns regarding the employment of seniors.



## **Functions of the PAC**

- 11) Actively promote Easter Seals PAC to encourage new membership.



## **Structure of the PAC**

- Each Easter Seals affiliate's PAC is identical in its mission and basic functions.
- Structure differs among sites.



## **Structure of the PAC**

- Size: Approximately 5-12 participants
- Officers elected by PAC
- Meeting Frequency: Mandatory quarterly, recommended monthly
- Minutes taken at each meeting and filed on site



## PAC Governing Documents

- By-laws
  - Determine how PAC operates
- Goals & Functions
  - Determine what the PAC accomplishes
- Both should be written and amended by the PAC



## National PAC Conference

- Annually one representative from each PAC (eleven sites) attends a National PAC Conference
- Purpose: Give PAC reps the opportunity to:
  - To give input to national staff
  - To learn more about SCSEP and Easter Seals
  - To work together on key struggles that all sites are having
- Representatives take what was



## Easter Seals Gulf Coast, AL

- Debbie Edmonds, SCSEP Program Director
- # member PAC



## **Role of SCSEP Project Staff in PAC**

- SCSEP project staff should act as facilitators
  - Help organize meetings
  - Provide administrative support
  - Answer questions
  - Keep PAC on task
- May have a more in-depth role at beginning of the PAC



## Helena Hanford, PAC Chairperson, **states:**

- “I feel it is good in that it serves as the voice of the organization (the participants), i.e., their concerns, special interests and ideas and possible enhancement of the program. It has helped me to focus and follow through.”
- She feels by attending the PAC meeting, she is “contributing to a much needed program that enables older workers to return to the work force.”
- She also stated that she is contributing to the program through her interests, ideas and enthusiasm.



Dot Hubbard, PAC member, **states**:

- “I think the PAC meetings are wonderful. It gives me a chance to express my ideas and hear other ideas.”
- She hopes by attending the meetings, she can obtain a full time job and make sure everyone else gets the type of job they want. She feels she can do this by making suggestions for the SCSEP program and listening to others.



Dian Noel, PAC member, **states:**

- “It is wonderful to have an agency that will find seniors a job, and also receive wonderful training.”
- By attending PAC meetings, she “hopes to receive valuable information concerning the PAC, jobs, and training.”
- She loves to contribute her ideas and have input in the program.



Ray Scroggins, PAC Assistant Chairperson,  
**states:**

- “It gives me the feeling I am doing something about jobs.”
- He hopes to “find ways to encourage businesses to hire the 55 and over group.”
- He also hopes he is making a difference by attending the meetings, making it easier to talk about the problems, and then to create solutions for the problems.



Joann Salter, PAC Secretary, **states:**

- “I feel the PAC has been a good idea. It has already given me much more experience in the line of work that I want to achieve.”
- She hopes to achieve a full time job in a clerical or secretarial field by using and developing her skills she uses at the PAC meetings and at her training site.
- She is interested in growing in the program and to help other participants to accomplish their goals for the future.



From left to right

Dian Noel

Dorothy Hubbard

Helena Hanford

Ray Scroggins

Joann Salter





## What More Could You Want?

- Participants carrying the message to other participants
- Valuable insight to what real issues need to be addressed through our program
- Participant buy-in at the highest level possible: program design, innovation and administration
- Participants are more dedicated, because they feel this is their program, and they can make a difference



## **Hidden Benefit of a PAC**

- PAC members become advocates for the SCSEP project staff to participants!
  - Once they understand the program more fully, they can be a powerful instrument of change in the participant-body.



For More Information, Contact:

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