Participants in Administrative Positions
Revised 11/16/10

A. Experience Works as Community Service Training Assignment
Experience Works may serve as the community service training assignment for participants. Participants may be assigned to Experience Works to perform various duties in support of administration of the SCSEP or other Experience Works’ non-SCSEP programs as part of their training provided that the assignments assist the participants in gaining the skills and competencies set forth in their Individual Employment Plans (IEPs). (See SCSEP Policy 100C)

Participants assigned to Experience Works in administrative positions are referred to as Participant Assistants.

Participant Assistants may only be supervised by Experience Works staff and not by other participants or Participant Assistants.

B. Use JobReady to Document Participant Assistant Assignment
The JobReady assessment system should be used to develop and document the community service assignment for all Participant Assistants. The Employment and Training Coordinator must obtain an “ETC-only” JobReady Administrator account for documenting all Participant Assistant assessments, re-assessments and IEPs. This will ensure the confidentiality of the Participant Assistant information and prevent other Participant Assistants from viewing or accessing each other’s JobReady data.

This ETC-only Admin Account should be requested by sending an email to the JobReady Manager along with a list of current Participant Assistants. The JobReady Manager will create the account and move all Participant Assistant assessment and IEP data to this account.

Responsibilities will be outlined in the JobReady Individual Employment Plan under the section titled “Training Plan – Training and Employment Objectives” and specific goals of the individual assignment will be outlined in the “Community Service Review- Specific Job Tasks” section.

Each Participant Assistant must receive a re-assessment and IEP update as necessary, but no less frequently than two times during a 12-month period, the same as regular participants.

The JobReady re-assessment replaces the old Participant Assistant Evaluation form. Participant progress in the training assignment and
performance is rated under the section titled “Training Plan – Training and Employment Objectives” where specific goals of the individual assignment were initially outlined in the “Community Service Review-Specific Job Tasks” section to rate performance on individual tasks.

Whenever a new Participant Assistant is appointed, the Employment and Training Coordinator must email the JobReady Manager advising of the assignment so this participant may be moved to the ETC-only Admin Account.

C. **Duties & Functions of Participant Assistants**
The duties and functions of each Participant Assistant may vary from person to person based on individual skills, training provided, and the needs of the territory, including, but not limited to, number of participants to be served, geographic size, job development potential, training needs of participants, and support needs of the Employment and Training Coordinator. For example, one Participant Assistant may perform only job development duties, while another may only assist with participant recruitment. One may assist with taking applications, while another may provide office support for the Employment and Training Coordinator. Some Participant Assistants may be assigned a broad spectrum of duties, providing an array of services from recruitment to job development (typically referred to as “end to end” services).

Participant Assistant assignments must be consistent with the participant’s unsubsidized employment objectives and IEP as documented in JobReady.

Participant Assistant assignments fall into three functional categories: Field Assistant, Administrative Assistant, or Clerical Assistant. Field Assistants and Administrative Assistants may be paid a higher wage than minimum wage and may be in training for more hours a week than regular participants. Participants in Field Assistant or Administrative Assistant assignments normally require more intensive training because their assigned duties are more complex than those of regular assistants. They are normally more involved in direct services to other participants. In addition, Field Assistants may be assigned to drive as part of their assignment.

Clerical Assistants may only be paid minimum wage, may only be in training for the same number of hours per week offered to regular participants, and may not drive as part of their assignment. Clerical Assistants normally provide limited basic clerical support to Experience Works staff or other Participant Assistants.
The Employment and Training Coordinator will use JobReady to identify appropriate duties required in the training assignment specific to each Participant Assistant based on her/his functions when completing the IEP. Examples of acceptable Participant Assistant duties include, but are not limited to:

- community service training site monitoring;
- gathering information and documentation to facilitate participant eligibility determination;
- gathering information or conducting unsubsidized placement follow-up services/activities for other participants;
- developing jobs;
- facilitating training, i.e., Teknimedia, Job Club;
- serving as an employment coach for other participants;
- providing general administrative assistance to staff;
- recruiting participants;
- recruiting community service training sites

D. Participant Assistants Prohibited from Certain Activities

Participant Assistants shall not be allowed to complete their assignment duties from home; exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the State Director with approval in writing from the Director of Programs and Compliance. Consideration will be given to budget issues and availability of office space. Participant Assistants fulfilling their training assignments from home, even on a temporary basis, should be the exception and not the rule.

Participant Assistants are not authorized to determine eligibility of other participants. Only an authorized staff person can make a final eligibility determination. Well-trained participant assistants can conduct intake and obtain documentation required for data validation; however, their recommended decision on eligibility must be presented to the appropriate staff person for final action. (see Data Collection Handbook, Topic 84 PF-62 and Policy 202E)

Participant Assistants are not authorized to investigate or mediate participant or community training site complaints. When the Participant Assistant is made aware of a complaint she/he shall immediately advise her/his Employment and Training Coordinator, who should then address the complaint themselves and seek guidance from their supervisor as needed.
Participant Assistants may not exit other participants from the SCSEP or transfer participants to new assignments without prior approval or direction from the Employment and Training Coordinator. Any exit or transfer forms completed by the Participant Assistant must be signed or initialed by the Employment and Training Coordinator as verification that the action was approved. Once a decision is made to terminate a participant’s enrollment, the Employment and Training Coordinator shall be the first to advise the participant and the community training site of the decision.

Participant Assistants may not incur costs without prior approval or direction from the Employment and Training Coordinator (for example, supplies may not be purchased, support services may not be authorized, and training may not be promised without prior knowledge and direction from the ETC).

Participant Assistants, like other SCSEP participants, are subject to the same prohibition against volunteering hours.

E. Limitation on the Number of Participants in Administrative Positions
Each project is authorized to utilize up to ten (10) percent of its authorized positions for Participant Assistant training assignments. The State Director or State Manager shall determine how many participants in administrative positions each Employment and Training Coordinator may utilize to assist them in providing services in their territory. The number allowed each ETC should be dependent upon the size and needs of the Employment and Training Coordinator’s service territory, the separation of responsibilities, and the overall needs of the project.

Under normal circumstances, a Participant Assistant should be assigned to assist no more than 25 participants at any given time.

F. Participants in Administrative Positions are Subject to SCSEP Program Requirements
Participant Assistants are subject to the same program requirements as other SCSEP participants, including but not limited to: enrollment priorities, eligibility criteria, re-assessment, re-certification, durational limits, job club and job search, and rotation to other community service assignments.

The rotation of Participant Assistants to other community service assignments, as with other participants, is not determined by a time period, but by the JobReady IEP and the needs within the area of operation.
Participant Assistants are subject to the provisions outlined in SCSEP Policy 501B, Limitations on Community Service Assignments.

G. Selection of Participant Assistants

Participant Assistants may be chosen from the pool of existing participants or from the applicant pool, provided enrollment priorities are followed.

The participants selected to become Participant Assistants will be thoroughly assessed by the Employment and Training Coordinator using the JobReady program.

Participants who demonstrate the following characteristics will be more likely to benefit from a Participant Assistant training assignment:

- courteous disposition;
- professional appearance;
- strong communication skills;
- good customer service skills;
- ability to adapt to change positively;
- ability to work under pressure;
- well organized;
- attention to detail;
- ability to complete paperwork accurately;
- an interest in learning;
- good computer skills;
- basic knowledge of standard office equipment; and
- a good driving record and dependable transportation, if required to drive.

Because computer skills are so important, both in the workplace and as part of the Participant Assistant function, each new Participant Assistant must take the JobReady computer literacy test within the first year of the Participant Assistant assignment. To ensure they have adequate computer skills to function in their assignment, each Participant Assistant must score a minimum of 70% on the computer literacy skills test. Existing Participant Assistants as of the effective date of this policy have one year to take and pass this test. Computer training may be offered to Participant Assistants as needed and within budgetary constraints to help them prepare for the test and to function more effectively in their assignment.

Before a Participant Assistant candidate is assigned to Experience Works, the State Director or State Manager must approve the assignment.
H. Participant Assistant File Contents

In addition to the standard participant application required for every SCSEP participant, the Participant Assistant file must contain additional forms and documents.

Prior to beginning the assignment, each participant selected for a participant assistant training assignment will receive a “Temporary Training Assignment Letter” signed by the State Director or designee outlining the training assignment parameters. This letter will outline the temporary nature of the assignment, the possibility of transfer to other assignments, the durational limit requirements, and rules for every participant assistant to follow. It will also include the rate of pay, trial training period, hours of training allowed per week and the mileage reimbursement rate currently in effect.

If the participant chooses to accept the assignment, they must acknowledge receipt of this letter and a basic understanding of its terms by signing the acknowledgement at the end of the letter. The signed Temporary Training Assignment Letter must be included in the Participant Assistant’s file.

Participant Assistants are subject to reassignment to a regular SCSEP training assignment at any time that it is determined that a transfer would be in the best interest of the participant, the ETC, or Experience Works. As with all participants, Participant Assistants will be encouraged to actively seek employment with the assistance of the ETC.

Participant Assistants are not Experience Works staff. However, because of the nature of their duties and their interaction with applicants, participants, and host agency representatives, they must adhere to certain policies that also govern Experience Works staff. These include the following:

- Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Policy;
- Harassment-Free Workplace Policy;
- Drug and Alcohol Policy;
- Electronic Communications Policy;
- Fraudulent & Dishonest Conduct Policy;
- Whistleblower Policy; and
- Travel Policy

Participant Assistants are required to acknowledge receipt of these policies by signing an acknowledgement form acknowledging receipt of
each policy. The acknowledgement form must be included in the Participant Assistant file.

Participant Assistants in assignments that require driving must be able to demonstrate that they have a valid driver’s license and adequate insurance. This is documented by completion of the following forms, which must also be included in the participant file:

- Motor Vehicle Verification with MVR and insurance declaration page. (The Participant Assistant must be named as the covered driver on the insurance declaration page.)
- Continuous Coverage Agreement

I. Trial Training Period for Participant Assistants

Participant Assistants will be assigned to an Employment and Training Coordinator for an initial “trial training” period. The trial training period will range from 30 to 90 days from the date the assignment begins at the discretion of the State Director or State Manager.

The trial training period will allow time for the participant, the Employment and Training Coordinator, and State Director or State Manager to assess if the assignment is a suitable one for this participant. At the end of the trial training period, the Participant Assistant will be re-assessed using the JobReady program and, if it is determined the assignment is suitable, the Training Plan will be updated and the training assignment will no longer be considered in “trial” status.

Authorized hours during the trial training period will be no less than the authorized hours for the state’s regular participants and up to no more than 24 hours per week at the discretion of the State Director.

Participant Assistants who are authorized to drive during the trial training period will be reimbursed for authorized business travel according to the Travel Policy.

Participant Assistants are subject to reassignment to a regular SCSEP training assignment at any time that it is determined that a transfer would be in the best interest of the participant, the Employment and Training Coordinator, or Experience Works. At the end of the trial training period, if it is determined the assignment is not suitable for this participant, a transfer into a regular participant assignment will be offered. As with all participants, assistants will be encouraged to actively seek employment with the assistance of the Employment and Training Coordinator.
J. **Wage Compensation**

Clerical assistants are subject to the same rate of pay offered to regular participants. As such, they will be paid minimum wage for the duration of their assignment.

Only Participant Assistants who function as Field Assistants or Administrative Assistants may be paid at an hourly rate above the minimum wage.

New Participant Assistants will be subject to a Trial Training period at the start of their assignment. Compensation during the trial training period shall be minimum wage, state or federal, whichever is higher, per DOL regulation.

In exceptional circumstances and supported by the JobReady skills assessment, the State Director may approve a new Field Assistant or Administrative Assistant to start at a higher wage rate of no more than 50 cents per hour over minimum wage during the Trial Training period.

At the end of the Trial Training period each Participant Assistant will be reassessed using JobReady. If it is determined the assignment is a suitable one, Field Assistants and Administrative Assistants will be removed from “trial” status and will be provided a wage increase up to 50 cents per hour above their starting wage, according to their skills and assignment. They will be eligible for subsequent increases annually thereafter.

Subsequent annual increases are subject to outstanding performance as documented in JobReady. The State Director has the discretion to set the amount offered for annual increases but must adhere to an overall wage cap of no more than $2.75 per hour above minimum wage.

For all wage rate increases, consideration must be given to the effect the rate of pay will have on the project PWFB budget.

All wage increases must be approved by the State Director prior to notifying the Participant Assistant and must be justified in the JobReady re-assessment and IEP. The State Director and State Manager must ensure all wage increases allowed for Participant Assistants are fair and equitable and that all assistants performing like duties to the same degree of satisfaction are treated in a like manner.
Pay increases must be documented on the Participant Action Report (PAR), approved by the State Director or State Manager, and forwarded to the CSC no later than the pay period prior to the effective date of the increase.

Current Participant Assistants whose rate of pay meets or exceeds newly established caps will retain their current rate of pay but will not receive increases going forward.

K. Travel Reimbursement
Depending upon the functions assigned, Participant Assistants may be authorized to travel to conduct official Experience Works business. Participant Assistants will be authorized to travel on behalf of Experience Works only if a motor vehicle record check, valid driver’s license, insurance declaration page and continuous coverage documents have been produced and approved.

Participant Assistants authorized to travel will use their privately-owned vehicles and are reimbursed for mileage at the current mileage rate allowed by the Experience Works travel policy for federal grant Participant Assistants or by the state funder for state grant Participant Assistants. Requests for mileage reimbursement must be documented by odometer readings and submitted on a travel expense report (TER), which must be approved by the supervising staff person and available for audit at any time. Travel expense reports (TER) must be submitted no less than bi-weekly.

Home to Assignment
Participant Assistants may not be reimbursed for travel (nor compensated for their time) when they report from home directly to their designated office. However, they may be reimbursed for travel (and compensated for their time) when they are required to report from their home directly to a training site they are visiting or a specified location other than their designated office.

Travel that is all in a Day’s Assignment
Time spent by a Participant Assistant in travel when that travel is required to enable the participant to complete assignments, such as travel from assignment to assignment, must be compensated.

The Employment and Training Coordinator should monitor that the Participant Assistant is traveling in an efficient manner and only when necessary. They should also monitor that travel status does not put the
Participant Assistant in the position of being in pay status more than 8 hours in a day.

**Travel away from Home Community**
Official business travel that keeps a Participant Assistant away from home overnight is travel away from home. Travel away from home is compensable time when it cuts across a Participant Assistant’s day by substituting travel for other duties. The time is not only hours counted on regular days during normal hours, but also during the corresponding hours on non-assigned days. All travel away from their home community must be pre-approved by the State Director or State Manager. All travel is to be limited to an eight-hour day.

**L. Cell Phones**
Participant Assistants may be reimbursed up to $25.00 per month for use of their personal cell phones for the purpose of conducting Experience Works business provided they submit a copy of their monthly bill to their supervisor and the Participant Assistant is listed as a user on the account submitted. The assistant may be reimbursed the actual amount of the bill or $25.00, whichever is less.

**M. Prepaid Telephone Calling Cards**
The State Director may choose to purchase prepaid telephone calling cards for participant assistants for the purpose of conducting Experience Works business and in lieu of a monthly cell phone reimbursement when the charges per minute on prepaid calling cards are substantially less than Experience Works’ long distance vendor. These cards are usually purchased from local stores such as grocery, pharmacy, Costco, Sam’s Club. When prepaid telephone calling cards are provided, the Participant Assistant is responsible for maintaining a log of all calls. The log must be submitted to his/her supervisor for review and approval at the end of each month. The log must provide Cardholder’s name, Date of call(s), Party called, and Reason for call.

**N. Internet Service**
State Directors may choose to pay for Internet connectivity for an office a Participant Assistant is assigned to if it benefits the program and the participants to do so and provided funds are available in the budget. However, Participant Assistants will not be reimbursed for or provided Internet connectivity at home.

Participant Assistants are required to adhere to the Experience Works electronic communications policy.
O. **Computer equipment:**
State Directors will provide computer equipment for Participant Assistant(s) usage when it benefits the program and participants to do so and provided funds are available in the budget.

Participant Assistants are discouraged from using their personal computer equipment for Experience Works business. Experience Works recognizes that Participant Assistants may choose to use their personal computer equipment in performance of their duties because they are familiar with their own equipment and it may be more readily accessible. However, such use must be completely voluntary, is discouraged, and may not be a mandatory part of the assignment.

State Directors may choose to reimburse Participant Assistants for computer supplies utilized on their personal computer equipment for Experience Works business provided such use was authorized and benefits the program and participants, and provided funds are available in the budget.

Participant Assistants may not load Experience Works software on their personal computers at any time without express written permission from the State Director or his designee. The State Director must ensure IT licensing requirements are adhered to.

Participant Assistants must sign a document acknowledging the receipt of all computer equipment and documenting the primary location of the equipment. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Participant Assistants provide proper care of said equipment, know how to use equipment assigned to them, and are aware they may not use Experience Works software in an unauthorized manner or in a manner that will negatively impact Experience Works IT systems.

To ensure they have adequate computer skills to function in their assignment and to properly care for and operate computer equipment assigned to them, each new Participant Assistant must take and pass the JobReady computer literacy test within the first year of the Participant Assistant assignment. Existing Participant Assistants have one year from the effective date of this policy to take the test.

Participant Assistants are subject to the Experience Works Electronic Communications Policy, whether using Experience Works’ equipment or using their own personal equipment to conduct Experience Works business.
When the Participant Assistant assignment comes to an end, the participant assistant must return all equipment and supplies provided by Experience Works.

P. **Business Cards**
Participant Assistants are often the “face” of Experience Works because they are the local representatives for the Employment and Training Coordinator. To assure that participants, host agencies and employers know the staff person who is responsible for Experience Works service in the local area, the only business card the Participant Assistant will have is that of the Employment and Training Coordinator. The Participant Assistant’s name, office phone number and an email address should be affixed by a label or printed on the back of the Employment and Training Coordinator’s business card.

Q. **Hours of Work**
Participant Assistants assigned as clerical assistants are offered the same number of hours per week in their assignment as regular participants throughout the state.

Only Participant Assistants assigned to be field assistants or administrative assistants may be offered more hours per week. These assistants may be offered up to 24 hours per week during the trial period and up to 28 hours a week once the trial period is over. State Directors may be more restrictive in the hours offered to Participant Assistants. Hours offered may differ from assistant to assistant and from territory to territory based on the needs of the territory.

Participant Assistants, like other SCSEP participants, are subject to the same prohibition against volunteering hours. The Employment and Training Coordinator must take extra precautions to monitor the workload and work schedules of Participant Assistants to prevent volunteer time.

Lunch or other meal breaks shall be scheduled in accordance with state law. When a Participant Assistant is required to perform duties for six or more hours per day, the participant is required to take a 30-minute break, at a minimum. All breaks shall not be considered work time and shall not be compensated by Experience Works. Under no circumstance may the participant perform duties for more than 8 hours in one day.

R. **Community Service Hours versus Training Hours**

Community Service Hours
Participant Assistants are assigned to community service with Experience Works as the host agency; therefore, the hours they spend in the course of their assigned duties are charged to Community Service.

If Experience Works provides the Participant Assistant with training to improve skills used in the course of the assignment, such as Teknimedia or JobReady training, the hours spent in training are considered Community Service because the training will improve performance of the community service assignment.

**Training Hours**

When training is provided in addition to the regular community service assignment so the participant can gain skills used outside of the Participant Assistant’s normal assignment, the time spent is charged to Training. For Participant Assistants, the typical training outside of the assignment is Job Club, classroom training, workshops, and seminars provided by someone other than Experience Works. All training is to be documented by completion of the Training Form.

**Hours Spent in Job Club**

Just as any other participant, Participant Assistants are required to attend Job Club to gain job search techniques. The time spent participating in Job Club should be charged to Training because it is not part of their community service assigned duties. However, if a Participant Assistant is assigned to lead or facilitate Job Club as part of the community service assignment duties, the hours spent in Job Club would be charged to Community Service.

**T. Job Search Responsibility**

As SCSEP participants, Participant Assistants are expected to gain skills during their community service assignments that will lead to unsubsidized employment. They are responsible for conducting job search and for attending Job Club to gain the necessary techniques that will help them achieve their employment goals.

The supervising Employment and Training Coordinator should encourage Participant Assistants on a regular basis to participate in job search and provide job leads when possible.

**K. Treating Participants Assistants Equitably but not like Staff**

Participant Assistants are first and foremost SCSEP participants that are assigned to Experience Works and, as participants, must abide by SCSEP requirements. Employment and Training Coordinators must remember that
Participant Assistants are not Experience Works staff and must reinforce this distinction whenever possible.

As with all participants, adequate supervision must be provided to Participant Assistants. The following should be part of the supervision provided by Experience Works staff:

- Provide quality training to each Participant Assistant at the beginning of the assignment and throughout its duration;
- have frequent regular meetings with Participant Assistants;
- provide daily/weekly supervision whether in person or by phone or email;
- refer to Participant Assistants as part of a team, not part of a staff;
- as with other participants, keep case notes on Participant Assistants;
- provide constructive assistance when mistakes are made and frequent praise for good work;
- counsel Participant Assistants if a problem arises that can be remedied by open discussion;
- be cautious about information shared with Participant Assistants, do not share confidential business or gossip with Participant Assistants;
- require the same job search activity from Participant Assistants as is required of other participants; and
- do not ask for personal favors such as running personal errands.

U. Durational Limit

Just like regular participants, Participant Assistants are subject to a maximum of 48 months of SCSEP participation, excluding approved breaks in service, unless the Participant Assistant has at least one documented most in need characteristic that meets the durational limit waiver criteria.

When the assistant meets at least one of the durational limit waiver criteria (as outlined in SCSEP Policy 206) and is subject to the 48-months limit, Experience Works will request approval from the U.S. Department of Labor to waive the 48-durational limit for an additional 12 months.

Participant Assistants who will be affected by the 48-month durational limit and who do not qualify for a waiver will be encouraged to aggressively focus on upgrading skills and finding employment. They will be reassessed and their IEP will be updated. They will be subject to intensive job search assistance and job development services, increased Job Club activities, supportive services and, for those unable to find employment, transitional services such as referral to social services, housing services, Area Agencies
on Aging, transportation services, and Aging and Disability Resource Centers.

V. Termination of Assignment

The end of assignment is driven by the IEP; if the IEP shows that additional training in the current assignment is needed, then the assignment can continue until the Participant Assistant exits the program to employment or other reasons, or the function being provided is no longer needed by Experience Works (for example if authorized positions are significantly decreased in an area or if job developer services are no longer required).

When the IEP does not support continuation of the participant in the Participant Assistant assignment or when the community service training site (Experience Works) no longer requires their services in this assignment (for example we no longer need an assistant in this area because we are no longer offering Teknimedia), the Participant Assistant must be offered a transfer to another community service assignment. If the new assignment is accepted and is to a regular participant community service assignment, the authorized hours and rate of pay must be reduced to that of other regular participants across the state.

Participant Assistants are subject to the same rules as any other participant and can be terminated for cause (see SCSEP Policy 902A).