

September 10, 2025

Honorable [REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR NAME]
U.S. House of Representatives/Senate
[Office Address]
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative/Senator [NAME]:

On behalf of the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging, I am writing in support of funding for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), a crucial part of the Older Americans Act administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. This program helps low-income, unemployed older adults, aged 55 and older, find job placements at nonprofit organizations in the community. Older adults enrolled in this program receive income that supports their daily needs like housing, food, and healthcare and often leads to permanent employment. Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Labor, without explanation, held back the \$300 million appropriated by Congress to fund the SCSEP program in FY2025. Thousands of older adults were dismissed from their job placements as a result.

In 2024, 24 percent of workers in the U.S. were aged 55 and older—that figure is expected to increase by 2030. In Wisconsin, there are 736,658 workers aged 55 and older, working in a variety of industries, including retail, customer service, farmers/ranchers, production workers, as drivers, and more. Milwaukee County was a participant in the SCSEP program, through a partnership with the agency Employ Milwaukee, with 55 available job placements for older adults 55 and above, who are unemployed, and with an income at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty line.

In Milwaukee County, 14.1 percent of older adults live at or below the federal poverty line. This percentage increases in certain portions of the county, particularly in the city of Milwaukee. Since the unexpected disruption of the SCSEP program earlier this year, older adults in Milwaukee County who relied on these job placements for needed income have lost their jobs and their paychecks. The Department of Labor's refusal to release the allocated funding promised to train, hire, and pay for these job placements will have detrimental impacts on the more than 19,500 participants in SCSEP across the country.

We urge the U.S. Department of Labor to immediately release funding for the SCSEP program so that participants can return to their job placements. Additionally, we urge Congress to fund the SCSEP program in FY2026. This program provides job training so that older adults can gain transferrable skills for other careers that support local organizations and economies. Crucially, the program ensures that older adults can remain healthy, housed, and well through jobs and steady income.

Please reach out if you have any questions about our support for the Senior Community Service Employment Program or any other aging issues of interest.

Sincerely,

Janice Wilberg, Ph.D.

Brian Peters

Chair
Milwaukee County Commission on Aging

Legislative Officer
Milwaukee County Commission on Aging