Challenges:

- Small number of Host Agencies that are able to provide remote/virtual services
- Transitioning participants from paid sick leave back to Community Service Assignments is still challenging due to Host Agency closures.
- Some participants who are uncomfortable returning to their traditional CSA’s due to health conditions.
- Some participants have experienced a lot of anxiety and trauma over the course of the pandemic.
- Impact of closed Host Agencies in rural areas that will not reopen and not providing community based services; who is filling the gap and providing these needed resources.
- Difficult to do remote supervision with a Host Agency. It takes more time on the Host Agencies part, to regularly check in with the participant and to navigate Zoom with them. Not sure if the Host Agencies even have this type of capability
- Rural areas have multiple charities, nonprofits who are generally their typical Host Agencies, were not able to sustain through the pandemic. This limits viable options for placement of SCSEP Participants.

Commonalities:

- 10 to 50% of participants are transitioning from paid sick leave back to their CSAs.
- Providing additional skills training to better prepare participants for unsubsidized employment.
- Continuing to provide on-line training and group activities that assist in reducing social isolation for SCSEP Participants.
- Seeing states beginning to open back up and reduce COVID19 restrictions is enabling Host Agencies to reopen and some SCSEP Participants are feeling more comfortable about returning to their CSA.
- Mental health issues are increasing among SCSEP Participants and some staff due to the pandemic.
As remote and virtual opportunities increase, socialization of SCSEP Participants decreases and may become non-existent

Successes:

- Developing Host Agency Supervisor Webinar around providing remote or virtual training opportunities to SCSEP Participants to increase the number of active participants
- Providing (ESL) training and referrals to certificate programs like medical billing and home services to enhance SCSEP Participant’s skills and prepare them for unsubsidized employment (grantee covers the cost of these programs).
- Some Host Agencies that are reopening or have opened, are providing on site CSAs thereby reducing the number of participants on paid sick leave.
- Continuing to provide regular check-ins through small group activities via Zoom with SCSEP Participants that provides interaction and reduces social isolation
- Beginning to register Host Agencies and SCSEP Participants for Tele-work training that will provide an overview on possibilities.
- Providing resources to Host Agencies that are active to ensure they continue to be a host site, even if it is a virtual or remote CSA.
- Making sure staff have a clear understanding of new process and forms for remote CSA opportunities, they can be executed swiftly and confidently

Promising Practices:

- DHS has become a Host Agency in multiple departments and is piloting their first participant, training virtually from home, doing data entry. DHS provided a laptop, and IPhone that can also be used as an internet hotspot and TEAMS access that will provide continuous interaction with the participant’s supervisor. If the pilot is successful, DHS may expand throughout the agency.
- Utilization of ATSS funds to develop an intensive remedial computer skills training that allows engagement with new participants to increase their skills. The goal is to have these participants be ready for administrative assignments and remote assignments. They have also partnered with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, that has an ATSS for equipment and this is provided to the SCSEP Participants in the
computer training program... The first year has yielded 100% retention in the program.

- AAoA becoming Host Agency and assisting with developing remote training opportunities and expanding this process throughout the state with other AAAoAs.