



# Senior Environmental Employment (SEE) Program Questions and Answers



## 1. What is the SEE Program?

The SEE Program is an employment program for older workers authorized by the Environmental Programs Assistance Act, passed by Congress in 1984. The purpose of the program is two-fold. First, it provides employment opportunities to senior citizens age 55 and older. Second, it provides assistance to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in its efforts to protect the Nation's environment by allowing the agency to supplement its regular work force.

## 2. What is the role of Senior Service America, Inc.?

To administer the SEE Program, EPA enters into cooperative agreements with six national aging organizations, including Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI). While EPA commits the monies to support the program, the funds go to SSAI which in turn processes payroll and handles fringe benefits.

## 3. Why doesn't the EPA just hire the senior directly? Why involve an organization like SSAI?

Issuing a grant or cooperative agreement to organizations like SSAI is the only way these positions can be targeted for a specific age group, in this case, for persons 55 and over. Positions with the federal government may not be limited to a certain age group.

## 4. Are SEE enrollees considered EPA employees?

NO. Even though SEE enrollees are assigned to work at EPA offices and laboratories, they are not federal employees and as such, there are restrictions on the kinds of activities they may perform in their assignments.

## 5. Who is eligible for the SEE Program?

The only eligibility requirement is that a person is at least 55 years of age and has the needed skills to perform the duties required. For certain positions, it may also be necessary to pass a medical monitoring examination indicating that the person is medically qualified to perform the job.

## 6. What kind of work does a SEE enrollee perform?

SEE enrollees are engaged in a wide variety of activities, from clerical support positions to technical and scientific positions.

## 7. Are positions in the SEE program permanent?

NO. There is no guarantee of permanent employment in the SEE Program. While most SEE positions are funded on a continuing basis, positions may be eliminated at EPA discretion due to budgetary considerations, reorganization or changing agency needs.

## 8. If EPA is not my employer, who will I report to?

While EPA is not your employer, you will still report to an EPA employee. Your EPA monitor will provide your day-to-day instructions.

## 9. What will my pay rate be?

Your starting pay rate will be based on the level of skill required and the responsibilities involved in your assignment. There are four job categories in the SEE Program, each with its own pay scale. Starting rates for the four levels are \$7.09 per hour, \$8.57 per hour, \$10.05 per hour and \$12.41 per hour, respectively. Your Field Operations Officer will inform you of the job level and starting rate for the position for which you are applying. There are provisions for periodic pay increases up to the maximum allowable in each of the four levels.

## **10. What are my fringe benefits as a SEE Enrollee?**

Enrollees in the SSAI SEE Program are entitled to the following fringe benefits: the employer's portion of FICA (Social Security), coverage under Worker's Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, vacation and sick leave (three weeks of vacation and two weeks of sick leave per year for full-time; pro-rated for part-time), ten paid holidays and one personal day, and comprehensive health insurance coverage for all enrollees working 30 hours or more per week.

## **11. What kind of health and dental insurance coverage would I have?**

Enrollees working thirty hours (30) or more per week are eligible to participate in a group health plan. Under the Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) Open Access Plus In-Network Plan, there is an annual deductible per individual. The plan provides convenient access to doctors in the network area. Participants begin the plan year with \$400.00 in their fund account, which the Senior Environmental Employment Program provides. After the initial \$400 is spent, individuals will pay out-of-pocket for services rendered. Monthly premiums are paid by the Senior Environmental Employment Program.

Enrollees are also eligible to participate in the Dental plan provided by through the SEE Program. Monthly premiums are paid out-of-pocket by enrollees. Under the plan, individual; family; and dependent coverage is available. Additional information regarding both plans (health and dental) will be provided once an applicant enrolls in the SEE Program.

## **12. What are some of the positive aspects of working on the SEE Program?**

The SEE Program provides senior citizens the opportunity to supplement their income, while performing meaningful work. The program provides some enrollees with an opportunity to re-enter the work force while gaining new experiences that may enable them to move into better paying, more permanent positions outside the SEE Program. For other enrollees who have been in the work force, the program has allowed them to remain active. For many enrollees, the opportunity to assist an agency whose purpose is to contribute to a better environment has provided an immense feeling of satisfaction about the value of their work.

## **13. What is Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI)?**

Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI), a non-profit corporation, which was established to develop and implement programs for older Americans. SSAI serves as the umbrella organization for the Senior Environmental Employment Program and the Senior Community Service Employment Program, providing needed employment opportunities for older men and women concerned about protecting the environment and expanding services in their local communities.