

Division of Older Worker Programs  
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# HOW TO PLAN, PREPARE AND PRACTICE A PRESENTATION TO PUBLICIZE YOUR PROGRAM

A Resource Manual for Use by SCSEP Practitioners Preparing for  
Presentations to Workforce Investment  
or One-Stop Career Center Boards

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## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

### *If not you, who?*

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) practitioners with real opportunities to increase services to older workers by merging resources and services from multiple funding streams. SCSEP is a required partner in the WIA system. Those of you who are already actively involved with the system know it can provide an avenue for you to expand your older worker services and to integrate your services in ways not possible before.

Unfortunately, there is not a great deal known about the special training and employment needs associated with low-income older workers. SCSEP is not a well-known program. People who work in the WIA system need to be made aware of the unique needs of this population, why low-income older workers need to be considered in their planning and why they should be recognized as a special population with multiple barriers to employment. As older worker advocates, you are the national voice of low-income older workers – the experts, the professionals who understand the special needs of this growing population. One-Stop and WIA Boards need to hear from you.

Some of you have always actively promoted SCSEP by speaking before community groups to gain their help with recruitment and job fairs or for a host of other reasons. You may have already spoken before WIA or One-Stop Boards. For you, the material here will be a review. This manual is to help those of you who have not had much experience speaking in public and who may have some reservations about trying it. It is intended to simplify the process and to help you overcome your reluctance to go out in the community and speak out for the program. It is especially intended to help all of you who understand that now is the time to speak out to make sure that low-income older workers get what they need from the new employment and training system.

# PLANNING AN EFFECTIVE ORAL PRESENTATION

## *Questions to Ask Yourself*

What is the purpose of my presentation?  
What is the makeup of my audience?  
What do they expect from me?  
What do I expect from them?  
Where will I make the presentation?  
Approximately how much time will I have?  
What do I need to bring with me?

**A Presentation is an Opportunity to Make Something Happen.** What do you want to happen? What you do want from your audience? Why are you there?

**Who is Your Audience?** What do you know (or can learn) about the people you will be addressing?

**What Exactly Do You Want to Gain from this Presentation?** Do you want to place an older worker specialist in the local one-stop career center, to become a training provider, to have a presence in the one-stop center, etc.? Be specific in what you hope to accomplish by this presentation.

**What Do You Want to Say about Your Program?** Decide on a few main points to emphasize. Only include topics which will help you attain your presentation goals.

**What Handouts Will You Use to Support Your Presentation?** You don't need much. Bring a one-page fact sheet (see later discussion on how to prepare one) and a brochure, if you have a good one. Do not distribute them until after your presentation.

## **Your Oral Presentation Should Contain:**

- An opening that makes your audience want to hear what you have to

say.

- Main points that express a few main ideas clearly.
- A closing that sums up your main points and restates what it is you want and what you are willing to give to get what you want. Your closing opens the door for negotiations or additional actions.

***Public speaking is a learned skill. You learn some fundamentals, then  
you  
PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.***

## HOW TO PREPARE A PRESENTATION

- Consider:**
- Who will be in the audience.
  - How much time you will have for your presentation.
- Focus On:**
- What you want to gain from the presentation.
  - What are the main points you want to emphasize.
- Outline:**
- The main points of your talk. (Limit yourself to a few topics). Some sub-topics under the main topics to provide details.
- Draft:**
- The speech, using the outline as your guide. Do not include many statistics. (Instead, tell your audience that you will have handouts describing your project available after your talk.)
  - An opening that tells the audience your name and organization and why you are there...and makes them want to hear more. Discuss mutual benefits. (Your opening creates the kind of impression you want to make on your audience.)
  - The body of your presentation should present a few main ideas supplemented with examples.
  - A closing that summarizes what you want the audience to remember and/or act on. (It is like the closing in a sales presentation. Repeat your name and organization, and, if you are making a request for something, say that you would like to have a response after they have had a chance to consider your request/proposal. Propose a date for further contact.)

### **Some Points to Consider**

- ✓ Keep your sentences short and brisk.
- ✓ Do not ramble on. Speak either from your outline or from your full text. Keep focused.
- ✓ Your opening and closing are what the audience will remember.
- ✓ A 2-minute presentation usually consists of about 220 words. Count the words to determine your time.
- ✓ Don't forget to thank your audience for its time and attention.

## **An Example of an Outline for a Presentation Before a Workforce Investment Board**

13. Greeting
14. I would like to place a SCSEP enrollee in a local one-stop center as an older worker specialist.
  - A. This would benefit the one-stop center in several ways:
    - 
    -
  - B. This would benefit older adults in the community:
    - 
    -
3. My SCSEP project is a valuable asset to the community.
  - A. What the program is and what it does in the community:
    - 
    -
  - B. Why SCSEP should be a partner in the one-stop center:
    - 
    -
4. I would like to begin the process for the partnership.
  - A. What I would like to put into an MOU.
    - 
    -
  - B. Suggestions on follow-up to the presentation.
    - 
    -
5. Thank you



## **HOW TO PRACTICE FOR A PRESENTATION**

1. Read your presentation over several times to yourself silently.
2. Time yourself. (220 words take about 2 minutes).
3. Revise the presentation if, when you read it, it sounds boring, pretentious, repetitious or unclear.
4. Re-read the corrected version, make additional changes if needed.
5. If you have someone to work with, read the presentation aloud.
6. Listen carefully to suggestions from the listener. Revise the presentation accordingly.
7. Read it aloud again, with the corrections. This time stand and speak as if you were addressing an audience.
8. Again, listen to any suggestions about your delivery and how it could be improved.
9. If time, practice again using your best delivery techniques and speaking from either your outline or your full text.
10. If you have a lot of time for preparation, carry the speech around with you and read it every chance you get. Become familiar with your main points. It is sometimes helpful to make a list of the opening sentences in each paragraph of the presentation and use them to jog your memory.

***The more you practice...the less nervous you will be when you make the presentation.***

# EFFECTIVE DELIVERY TECHNIQUES

*Good delivery is simple, lively and emphatic.*

*Do you have your listeners' attention?*

*Do they grasp your meaning?*

## Your Voice

The most carefully prepared presentation is worth nothing if the audience can't hear and understand what you are saying. You owe it to your audience to:

- Speak loudly enough to be heard.
- Speak clearly and enthusiastically.
- Speak at a rate to match your message.

Put energy into your voice. Speak like you mean what you are saying. Ending your sentences on a rising note makes it sound like you are asking a question or are unsure about what you are saying. Speaking in a monotone is a sure way to send your audience to sleep.

Do not race through your talk as if you had a train to catch. Try for a measured delivery that allows you to put emphasis on the points you want the audience to remember.

Enunciate distinctly. Are you using many "urs" or "uhs"? Use a tape recorder to hear what you sound like to others.

Make sure your voice is not *too*:

- soft
- indistinct
- belligerent
- loud
- mannered
- obsequious

## Your Eyes

Do not keep your head and your eyes down or look upward as if you were staring at the ceiling. If you are

reading your presentation, be familiar enough with it that you can look up from it frequently. If you practice enough, this will not be difficult.

Look squarely and steadily at the people you are talking to. Don't stare at just one person. Move your eyes from one person to another.

## **Your Body**

Stand in a relaxed position. Line up your feet with your armpits. Try to stay anchored. A swaying body is disconcerting. Don't pace back and forth.

Move your head to add emphasis to a point. It is not necessary to look like a robot.

You want your audience to see you as someone who is comfortable and self-assured.

## **What to Wear**

Wear something that doesn't wear you. Dress in a way compatible with the occasion and the audience. For both men and women, a suit is always appropriate.

Put comfort first, but not at the expense of fit. Make sure that nothing hangs or falls off you. Wear shoes that don't hurt your feet.

# OVERCOMING STAGE FRIGHT/BUILDING CONFIDENCE

*Competence breeds confidence.  
Habits help reduce anxiety.*

## **About Stage Fright**

Stage fright is a common response to a threatening situation; it is natural to feel some anxiety in front of an audience. Some of the greatest orators of all time have suffered from stage fright.

Some people are stimulated by an audience; others are terrified. The physiology of excitement and fear is about the same, each causes:

- Increased blood pressure
- Increased respiration
- Increased metabolism
- Increased tension.

A study showed 77% of experienced speakers had some state fright before speaking. Most of these believed that a little stage fright helped make a better talk. With experienced speakers, stage fright is generally limited to initial fears that diminish as the speaker talks. It is believed that this initial reaction provides the energy for the speaker to give a better talk.

## **Stage Fright Is Not a Terminal Condition**

Stage fright and anxiety are the same thing. Both are characterized by dread and , in both, the dread is not justified by the situation that produced it. For instance, in most instances where you will be giving presentations, your audience will be made up of those who share your interests and will be receptive and interested in what you have to say.

## **Make Wanting to Speak Win**

Some things to know about stage fright:

## **Over Not Wanting to Speak**

- Audiences, including experienced speech teachers, usually underrate the degree of stage fright a speaker has. Your anxiety symptoms will be more noticeable to yourself than to others.
- Stage fright diminishes with age.
- The more you speak, the less stage fright you will have.
- The more prepared you are, the less your stage fright. Lack of preparation will increase your fear of speaking.

## **Stress Reduction Techniques**

Stage fright is caused by conflict. Conflicts are reduced by increasing desires that make you want to speak and weakening desires in the opposite direction. You may increase the desire to speak by:

- Wanting to speak to just get it over with.
- Wanting to build on your experience and expertise.
- Knowing you have something to lose by not giving a talk.
- Convincing yourself that what you have to say is important and needs to be heard.
- Knowing you have something to gain by making a presentation.

## **Stress Reduction Techniques (cont.)**

Practice deep breathing. Take a deep breath and say “ten” silently when you exhale deeply. Continue breathing, counting from “nine” through “zero.” Go through the exercise again, this time imagining yourself at the top of a flight of stairs holding on to a bannister.

Breathe in, say “ten” as you exhale and step down a stair. Continue until “zero.”

Take a few deep breaths before you talk. If you get stuck during your talk breathe deeply, then continue.

Tense the muscles in your feet for a few seconds, then relax them. Continue up the various parts and organs of your body. Tense, then relax. Finish tensing your fingers by making tight fists.

## **THINGS *NOT* TO DO WHEN MAKING A PRESENTATION**

### **DO NOT:**

- Slouch, frown, keep head and eyes downcast
- Slump backwards with your legs crossed when sitting
- Wring your hands nervously
- Ignore the people around you
- Look indifferent or grim
- Look downward
- Fidget with a pencil, pen, or your glasses
- Tap your foot or swing a leg rhythmically
- Look into space, look bored or squirm
- Toss your hair, brush it back, or continuously move it out of your eyes
- Yawn, chew gum, or chew on your lower lip
- Scratch anything
- Repel and reject your audience.

## **ASKING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN A PRESENTATION**

### **When You Ask If There Are Any Questions, but Get No Response:**

- Allow time for people to think. If the silence becomes too long or too uncomfortable, initiate questioning – ask a question of your own.  
*Example:* “Does anyone have a question about how my program affects the community?”

### **When You Are Not Sure You Understand the Question:**

- Rephrase the question as you understand it. This is better than saying “What did you say” or asking someone to repeat the question.  
*Example:* “Are you asking me to name the advantages of having an older worker specialist on site at the one-stop center?”

### **When You Don’t Know The Answer to a Question:**

- Do not hedge, mumble or pretend the answer has slipped your mind. Admit you do not know the answer and give a specific time when you will provide the information.  
*Example:* “I don’t have that information right now. If you will give me your card, I will put the information in the mail (or call you at your office) on Wednesday.”

### **When the Question Is One That Will Require Research or Investigation Which Could Be Time Consuming, or Has Elements or Implications That May Make it Politically Unwise to Answer Right Now:**

- The answers to some questions require statistics or data that may take additional time and effort. In addition, it could be ill advised to answer some questions without checking with your employer.  
*Example:* “It’s going to take me some time to get that information to you. I’ll give you a call later this week to let you know when you can expect it.”

### **When it Is Obvious That the Questioner Is Hostile to Your Presentation and Is Trying to Irritate You:**

- Do not rise to the bait. Do not lose your temper or in any way appear to be ruffled. Maintain your composure. Smile before you answer. It will



be obvious to everyone that the questioner is trying to make you lose your confidence.

*Example:* “That’s an interesting question. I’m not sure I’m qualified to answer it. Perhaps I could get back to you on that.”

**When You Want to End Questioning:**

- There are times when the questions seem to be going on forever. You realize you have said what you wanted to say. It is time to close.

*Example:* “Thank you so much for your very kind attention. My telephone, email and fax numbers are on my handout. I would be most happy to hear from anyone who has additional questions for me.”

## **HOW TO PREPARE A ONE-PAGE FACT SHEET AS A HANDOUT**

Few things are more boring than listening to a presentation that is heavily interspersed with statistics. Yet statistics are important, and they are particularly important in the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Statistics alone can verify how and why the program has survived most other federally-funded social programs by providing a wide range of services to a wider range of older individuals and community agencies.

A presentation handout should supply the audience with the facts and figures to back up the presenter's remarks. It should provide basic program data in a format that is easy to read and understand. Wherever possible, the handout should be limited to one page, printed on both sides of the paper. Some presenters like to include a program brochure as a handout. Brochures usually do not include all the latest detailed information on the program and should be used as an addition to rather than a substitute for a one-page fact sheet.

The format for the handout depends on your ingenuity. Try to keep the major facts on the front of the sheet. Busy people tend to look at these things quickly and superficially. Highlight or bold those items that you most want people to notice.

Be sure to point out how you are serving unmet priority needs in your area. Listing unsubsidized jobs with solid job titles and sound wages is the best indication that the program is working. Include, also, any successful training that you are providing, particularly if that training is directed towards preparing enrollees for high tech markets.

It is usually a mistake to distribute handouts before a presentation. We all have the tendency to look through material that is given to us. Do you want your audience to look at the handouts or listen to you?

Name of Program  
Address

Sponsoring Agency  
Telephone

E-mail

Fax

Contact

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• **What**

• **Where**

• **Who**

• **Why**

What the program is. Federal and national sponsors of the program. Who administers it locally. What local cities and counties the local program serves. How many older residents were served by the program last year.

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Statistics About Incomes, Ages, Genders, Education, Ethnic Groups, Etc. of Enrollees  
(Use latest end-of year quarterly progress report (QPR) for enrollee statistics.)

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Services Provided by Program (Use QPRs and grant proposals)

Number and types of host agencies. Types of work performed by enrollees.  
Percentages of enrollees working in major services (see QPR "Job Inventory.")

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Number And Examples of Unsubsidized Jobs Gotten by Enrollees (Use termination forms.)

What percentage of enrollees got unsubsidized jobs last year? Provide numbers of enrollees who left for unsubsidized jobs as well as non-enrollees who were helped. Supply several examples of good unsubsidized positions. Include pay rates.

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Priority Needs in Your Area. How Does Your Program Address These Needs? (Use grant proposal.)

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An Example of an Unusual Service Provided by Your Program.  
Have you started a services that wouldn't exist without the program? Are you providing a successful training program? What have you done that is impressive?

**On back of page: list host agencies and enrollee positions at the agencies.**

**ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING PRESENTATIONS**

*Effective public speaking is a matter of making choices in the way you appear and the way you use your hands and body. It is a skill like any other that can be acquired and practiced. You learn the fundamentals and, like tennis or golf, the more you practice, the better you get.*

- ★ You advance both yourself and your program professionally when you make effective presentations.
- ★ An oral presentation is an opportunity to make something happen. What do you want to happen? Be clear about your objective.
- ★ When you make a presentation, have a fact sheet on your program as a handout. Your presentation should be interesting enough to make listeners want to know more about your program. Statistics are more digestible in written form.
- ★ Plan and write your presentation carefully:
  - Tailor your remarks to your specific audience.
  - Limit your main ideas.
  - Your opening should get attention, prepare for what's to follow, discuss mutual benefit. First impressions resist change.
  - Your ending should stamp your message indelibly in audiences' minds.
  - Close your presentation as if you were closing a sale.

- ★ Practice your delivery techniques.
  - The total visual impression you make on your audience is more memorable than the vocal or verbal impression you make.
  - Dress professionally and comfortably in clothes that fit.
  - Stand in a steady, balanced position.
  - Look directly at your audience.
  - Keep your hands relaxed and natural.
  - Speak so you can be heard. Put some energy into your voice.
  
- ★ Practice–Practice–Practice some more.
  - Use an outline or the full presentation - whichever you're more comfortable with.
  - Get someone to listen and critique your performance.
  - If possible, videotape yourself and watch it objectively.
  - Use a tape recorder to time yourself. Do you like the way you sound?
  - Be prepared. It turns people off when they listen to someone rambling on.
  
- ★ Prepare yourself with techniques to overcome stress from public speaking.
  - It is normal and natural to feel stress when making oral presentations.
  - Practice a few breathing techniques and use them while awaiting to make your presentation.
  - Few people die from the stress of public speaking.

***Sound and act like you know what you're talking about.***

***Be energetic and focused.***

***Look at and respond to your audience.***