

SHIBA

volunteer handbook



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Welcome!

Thank you for joining the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors, or SHIBA. We appreciate and value your contribution of time, talent, enthusiasm and energy in helping others navigate Medicare.

The purpose of this handbook is to guide you in your volunteer experience with SHIBA and to give you a solid foundation of SHIBA's mission, policies, procedures and program responsibilities. A clear understanding of expectations is the foundation for a safe and positive environment for all SHIBA volunteers and staff. While the content is intended to inform you of your responsibilities as a volunteer, it is also intended as a reference if you have any questions during your volunteer service with SHIBA.

To assist you in learning about SHIBA and about specific volunteer responsibilities, we ask that all volunteers become familiar with and follow the information, guidelines and requirements presented in this handbook. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it for reference.

The content in this handbook may be modified at any time in order to provide you with the most updated information available.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to let us know by contacting us at admin4shiba@oic.wa.gov.

Thank you for being a part the SHIBA team and we hope you find this to be a rewarding experience!

Office of the Insurance Commissioner

Overview

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) is a fairly small Washington state agency. It runs under the direction of the Insurance Commissioner, a statewide elected official. Unlike most state agencies, we don't receive public tax dollars. Insurance companies pay an administrative fee to cover all of our costs.

The OIC employs about 240 people who support the agency's mission of consumer protection and insurance industry regulation from central offices located in Olympia, Tumwater and Seattle with a satellite office in Spokane. The OIC considers the over 150 SHIBA volunteers, 16 SHIBA sponsoring organizations* and their staff as part of the OIC family.

*Sponsoring organizations are local community organizations that contract with the Office of Insurance Commissioner to support its mission to provide free, unbiased information about health care coverage and access to help improve the lives of all Washington state residents. Sponsors will provide staff and/or volunteers to educate residents about their healthcare options, evaluate and compare Medicare insurance plans, and make public presentations.

Role

The OIC regulates insurance business in Washington state under authority from state insurance laws.

Consumer protection is the most important job of the Insurance Commissioner. Annually, the OIC investigates and resolves thousands of complaints and recovers millions of dollars for consumers. The Insurance Commissioner also coordinates many protective and assistance services for insurance consumers. Staff in the Consumer Protection Division, which is where SHIBA resides, respond to thousands of questions from consumers every year.

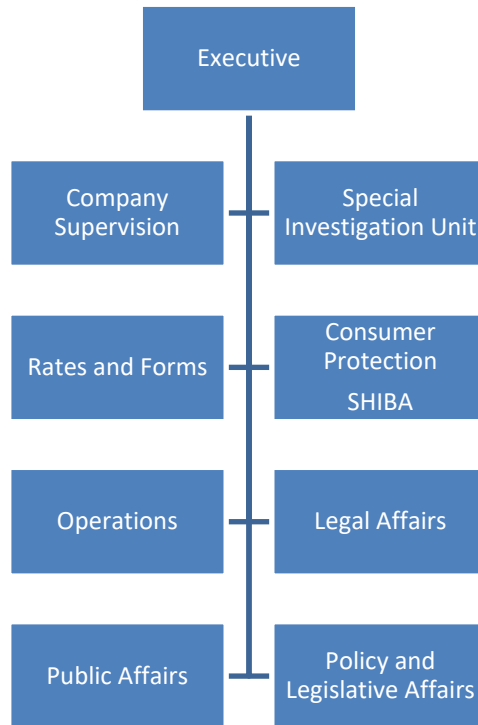
The Insurance Consumer Hotline is a toll-free line consumers can call for help with all issues related to insurance. Calls are triaged and sent to either our compliance analysts or SHIBA. Our compliance analysts help with insurance issues, plans and companies that the OIC regulates. When insurance issues are outside OIC's

control (such as issues regulated by federal law), staff refer consumers to appropriate resources. Annually, the Insurance Consumer Hotline receives and answers thousands of consumer calls and live chat sessions.

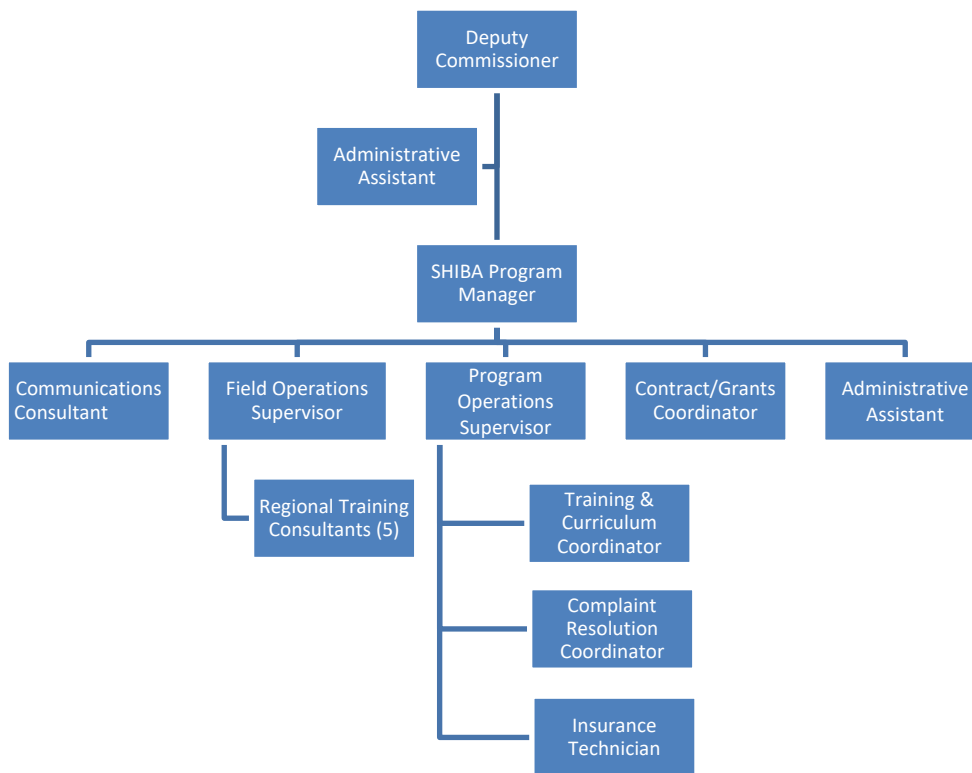
SHIBA assists consumers with all kinds of health insurance, but mainly Medicare-related plans such as prescription drug plans, Medigap plans, public programs and fraud and abuse.

We're proud of the work we do at the OIC and we're glad you're part of our team!

Office of the Insurance Commissioner Organization chart



Consumer Protection (CP) Division – SHIBA



About State Health Insurance Assistance Programs and SHIBA

SHIPs

The State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) provide free, in depth, one-on-one insurance counseling and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, friends and caregivers. **SHIBA is the SHIP program for Washington state.** SHIPs operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and are grant-funded projects of the federal U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL). For more information visit www.acl.gov or www.shiptacenter.org.

SHIBA mission statement

SHIBA provides free, unbiased information about health care coverage and access to help improve the lives of all Washington state residents. We cultivate community commitment through partnership, service and volunteering.

Who we are

- SHIBA is part of the Consumer Protection Division within the OIC.
- We're a free health care access and information resource.
- We provide information and counseling services to help consumers evaluate, plan for their needs, and use health insurance—mainly Medicare—and public health programs.

SHIBA is an education and referral system of:

- Community volunteers
- Local sponsoring agencies
- OIC staff
- Other government agencies and community partners

SHIBA history

- In operation since 1979
- Started by a volunteer in Skagit County
- The first program of its kind in the nation
- Recognized nationally as a model for health insurance consumer counseling
- Inspired federal funding to create SHIPs in all states
- Sixteen local sponsoring agencies represent all 39 Washington counties

SHIBA services

Features and benefits

- FREE!
- Impartial and objective (no affiliation with any insurance company or product)
- Confidential
- Accessible offices in nearly every county

Ways we can help

- Assess health care coverage needs.
- Assist Medicare beneficiaries to protect from Medicare fraud.
- Screen for possible eligibility for programs.
- Evaluate and compare policies and programs.
- Identify and report possible fraud.
- Provide referrals to other agencies and programs.

Methods and activities

- One-on-one counseling
- Public presentations and workshops
- Health fairs and special events
- Publications and online resources
- Referrals
- Community partnership development
- Recruiting and training volunteers
- Continuing education

Who SHIBA serves

- People of all ages, all walks of life
- People with disabilities
- Seniors and pre-retirees
- Ethnic populations
- LEP (Limited English Proficiency) communities
- Disease-specific groups
- Uninsured people
- Rural populations
- People of all economic backgrounds

SHIBA staff and resources

We're here to help! Following is information on how to reach our office. Please work with your volunteer coordinator or regional training consultant if you have questions about staff, resources or SHIBA operations. A current staff contact list is posted on My SHIBA at: www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba.

SHIBA reception360-725-7097
Insurance Consumer Hotline.....800-562-6900

Visit or call between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Email: admin4shiba@oic.wa.gov

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 40255
Olympia, WA 98504-0255

Street address:

5000 Capitol Blvd. SE
Tumwater, WA 98501

SHIBA staff contacts

For a full SHIBA staff list and their job duties, go to [My SHIBA](#) at: <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba> and search for “SHIBA staff contact list.”

Senior Medicare Patrol

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is a federal program that funds SHIBA to be the Washington state SMP to educate consumers, caregivers and families about Medicare fraud, abuse and errors.

The **SMP mission:** Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) empower and assist people on Medicare, their families and caregivers to **prevent, detect and report** health care fraud, errors and abuse.

For information, go to: www.smpresource.org.

Prevent, detect, report

Knowing what fraud and abuse are—and the difference between the two—is crucial, and educating people is critical to SHIBA’s mission. As SHIBA volunteer advisors, we’re more effective if we can help clients understand what a fraudulent activity is. We may need to counsel and educate clients around how the health care system and billing works, and how to read Medicare summary notices.

Volunteer Risk Program Management (VRPM) Policies and working with the Administration for Community Living (ACL)

SHIPs rely on volunteers to serve Medicare beneficiaries within their states and territories. SHIBA is the Washington state Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) and SHIBA volunteers help people on Medicare with preventing, detecting and reporting fraud. Without sound volunteer policies, there are inherent risks to SHIPs and SMPs in recruiting, training and managing these volunteers. With that in mind, our grant funder the Administration for Community Living (ACL) has developed a set of volunteer policies, which we describe in this handbook.

These policies are designed to establish and organize the structure and operation of volunteer programs within SHIBA. They describe the governing principles and

values that shape and guide volunteer involvement, set expectations about the management of volunteer programs, delineate core expectations of SHIBA volunteers and broadly describe what volunteers can expect from SHIBA.

NOTE: We will reference VRPM policies throughout this handbook.

Complete text of all VRPM policies is available for review in the [VRPM Policy Manual](#) located on [My SHIBA](#) where you may search for “VRPM.”

The purpose of the volunteer policies is to enhance the quality, effectiveness and safety of SHIBA services through the guidance and direction of SHIBA management. They do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

The volunteer policies are consistent with, and support the missions of, the SMP and SHIP programs, fostering the ethical, productive and rewarding engagement of volunteers in SHIBA services.

ACL reserves the exclusive right to change any aspect of the volunteer policies at any time and expects the SHIBA program, and its volunteers and partners who serve at SHIBA sponsor locations, to follow the policies.

The SHIBA program manager must request in writing in advance any changes or exceptions to the national SMP/SHIP volunteer policies, which only the ACL can grant. (VRPM policy 1.5)

It's the volunteer's responsibility to seek clarification about policies, as needed. Not understanding a policy is not an acceptable reason for failing to comply. (VRPM policy 3.87)

Volunteer selection & certification process

Recommended volunteer qualifications

- Computer, email and Internet skills are highly recommended (or a willingness to learn).
- Willing to complete necessary paperwork and record keep in a timely manner.
- Excellent organizational and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to follow volunteer policies, scope and guidelines.
- Above-average listening and communications skills.
- Ability to show compassion and sensitivity while maintaining professionalism.
- Ability to understand cultural differences and work with diverse groups of people.
- Ability to fluently speak another language other than English.
- Legible handwriting or typing skills.

All volunteers must complete the following:

- Volunteer Application
- Volunteer Agreement
- Resource Record
- Background check
- Confidentiality Agreement

All volunteers must also:

- Participate in the screening and selection process that includes an interview with the sponsor.
- Provide at least two references of former or current supervisors of employment, volunteer activities or other credible sources. (VRPM policy 3.36)

- ❑ Take the required training for your SHIBA role as soon as your background check is complete.
- ❑ Complete any other steps that are required for your SHIBA role, for example, successfully passing any required exam or participating in mentoring or job shadowing.

NOTE: At any time during the selection and certification process, you, the sponsor and/or OIC staff have the right to decide whether SHIBA is the right fit for you.

Volunteer roles and length of service

We have various roles, which our volunteers may donate their time to. See [My SHIBA](#) for role job descriptions.

Volunteer Role Examples:

- Medicare counselor
- Medicare counselor with SMP fraud endorsement
- Medicare presenter
- Medicare outreach/exhibitor
- SHIBA administrative support
- MIPPA in-kind staff partner
- **Other roles:** SHIBA may create other roles not outlined above, or we may ask a volunteer to fill more than one of the SHIBA roles.

SHIBA works with individual volunteers and other team members to match that volunteer's skills and interests to the needs of the SHIBA program. As a result, SHIBA volunteers may serve Medicare clients, their families and caregivers in many creative ways.

Visit [My SHIBA](#) for more information on volunteer roles and position descriptions.

SHIBA policies apply to all SHIBA volunteer roles, whether through direct service with SHIBA or involvement in SHIBA activities via a sponsor location. You may be qualified to serve in more than one role. (VRPM Policies 1.4 and 3.14)

Role descriptions vary and include the following:

- Purpose of the role

- Role duties
- Designated supervisor
- Worksite location(s)
- Time frame for the performance of the work along with work schedule
- Qualifications
- Benefits of the role to volunteers

Path to becoming a certified SHIBA volunteer

SHIBA volunteers are certified for their specific role. The most common role is the SHIBA Medicare counselor. The Path to SHIBA certification outlines the application and applicant screening process for SHIBA Medicare counselor. If you choose to prepare for a different role to the Medicare counselor role, your path may look different from this example. Refer to the SHIBA role descriptions on My SHIBA for more information.

SHIBA applies a formal selection process to all prospective volunteers. This process varies according to the nature and degree of responsibility of the volunteer role, access to money or other valuables, access to personal or confidential information and/or access to clients. Positions of trust—such as counselor or presenter—are subject to more rigorous screening inquiries.

Only authorized people make the screening and acceptance decisions—typically the SHIBA volunteer coordinator or the SHIBA program manager. (VRPM policy 3.28)

Path to SHIBA certification for Medicare Counselor

Becoming a certified SHIBA Medicare counselor involves a multi-step process before someone can start working with clients. To ensure the volunteer's success, every step of the certification process provides unlimited support and assistance from SHIBA staff and other volunteers.

Your path to becoming a SHIBA volunteer may vary depending on your role. Work with your volunteer coordinator or regional training consultant for guidance. See [My SHIBA](#) for more information on roles and steps.

Path steps for SHIBA volunteer Medicare counselors

1. Application
2. Interview
3. National-level criminal background check
4. Foundational Online SHIP TA training
5. Basic training
6. Certification exam
7. Mentoring
8. Certificate and badge
9. Certified volunteer starts working with clients
10. Attend required regular training

Expectations of a SHIBA volunteer

- All SHIBA volunteers, regardless of length of tenure, are subject to the provisions of all volunteer policies, including new policies coming into effect during an existing volunteer's tenure.
- Existing volunteers must meet all new screening standards relevant to the role(s) they hold, with the exception of interviews and reference checks, which do not need to be initiated or repeated with existing SHIBA volunteers. SHIBA carefully considers all pertinent information gathered in the screening process and applies the following screening checks (VRPM policies 3.27, 3.45, 3.29, 3.31, 3.47, 3.31, 3.49, 3.44):
- While screening processes vary by role, we screen applicants for any given role the same as all other applicants for that same role.
- All screening inquiries and decisions comply with relevant human rights requirements.

- ❑ SHIBA notifies prospective volunteers early in the application process about the range of screening inquiries the program uses for its various volunteer roles.
- ❑ SHIBA doesn't start screening inquiries without an applicant's prior knowledge and permission. Prospective volunteers agree to SHIBA's right to conduct appropriate inquiries about their background and qualifications, and cooperate fully in the fulfillment of these checks.
- ❑ If a volunteer applies for a transfer to another volunteer role that requires a more intensive initial screening process than the current role the volunteer's in, SHIBA will subject the volunteer to the additional screening inquiries for the other role. Failure to satisfactorily meet these additional screening requirements is grounds for denying the transfer.
- ❑ Prospective volunteers have the right to refuse permission for any line of screening inquiry, in which case, SHIBA reserves the right to terminate the application process and refuse accepting that person as a SHIBA volunteer.
- ❑ The SHIBA VC informs applicants of a projected time line for the screening process at the time of their initial interview. The VC will inform the applicant if screening takes longer than expected.
- ❑ The SHIBA VC informs prospective volunteers about the outcome of their application as quickly as possible.
- ❑ Screening protocol is adjusted as roles change, and/or as standards of care and due diligence recommend.
- ❑ Falsifying information, including material omission or misrepresentation, at any point during screening is grounds for immediate disqualification from the application process, or immediate dismissal if SHIBA discovers the falsehood after acceptance.

Background checks

SHIBA runs a criminal record check on all prospective volunteer applicants. This is done to determine if there are any criminal violations that make an applicant unsuitable for SHIBA assignments. (VRPM Policies 3.38, 3.46)

Driver's license checks

Volunteers whose SHIBA responsibilities include driving a motor vehicle must have a valid driver's license and auto insurance. The volunteer coordinator is required to check for this documentation at the start of the volunteer term and at the three-year assessment period. This requirement might also mean the volunteer show proof if seeking OIC travel approval and reimbursement. (VRPM policy 3.39)

Continued training development

We provide extensive training to all volunteers. We ask volunteers to:

- Strive to become and remain proficient in performing your SHIBA role.
- Examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to SHIBA and Medicare.
- Participate in continuing education relevant to your volunteer role.
- Provide services only within the boundaries of your training, SHIBA scope and experience.
- Have a knowledge base of clients' cultures and be sensitive to clients' cultural beliefs.
- Ask the advice and counsel of colleagues and regional trainers whenever it's in the best interest of clients.
- Refer clients to others when specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when additional service is required.
- Attend monthly continuing education (CE) and other SHIBA training sessions as defined by your SHIBA volunteer role.

Certification: Acceptance and appointment

Volunteers may start their work with SHIBA once the program's formally accepted them into service. (VRPM policies 3.52, 3.13, 3.30, 3.50)

- Service as a volunteer with SHIBA starts with the applicant receiving an official, written notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer role.
- SHIBA will not offer conditional certification to a potential volunteer. For example, volunteer coordinators will not offer an appointment to a volunteer

now with the condition that the volunteer pass the certification exam within a month.

- SHIBA does not automatically accept everyone as a volunteer.
- SHIBA reserves the right to not accept applicants. This decision is based on an objective and equitable assessment of their fit as a SHIBA volunteer. The SHIBA program manager has final authority on this decision.
- When a volunteer coordinator places a volunteer in a role, they pay special attention to the volunteer's interests and capabilities and the requirements of the volunteer role. They will not place someone unless they can meet the volunteer's requirements and the role requirements.
- Volunteer coordinators will place volunteers in roles where volunteers have access to paid staff for support.

Volunteers do not displace paid staff. Paid staff include OIC staff and in-kind contracted staff from sponsor sites. The availability of volunteers is never a factor in the consideration of staff layoffs, terminations or loss through attrition. Volunteers supplement, but do not replace the work of paid staff.

Re-acceptance

Re-accepting someone who previously served as a SHIBA volunteer doesn't automatically occur. The SHIBA program manager, or their designee, will take into consideration the person's past volunteer performance and the results of any updated or additional screening inquiries that pertain to the role they are applying for and would like to serve in as a volunteer. (VRPM policy 3.48)

Re-assignment

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a SHIBA role will receive all appropriate orientation, training and screening (if applicable) before they start work. (VRPM policy 3.54)

Badge



Once a volunteer's successfully completed any required training and mentoring, SHIBA will issue a SHIBA name badge with the volunteer's photo. Volunteers use the identification only when carrying out official and authorized SHIBA duties. (VRPM policy 3.92)

If you decide to quit or retire, you must turn in your SHIBA ID badge to your volunteer coordinator.

Next steps: Start working with clients

The following client services guidelines will help you give the absolute best service when you're counseling the public:

- ✓ Provide service in a responsible and objective fashion, without regard to the background or characteristics of clients.
- ✓ Provide current and accurate information and seek additional assistance or information when in doubt or when specialized knowledge or expertise is required.
- ✓ Give clients information so they can make their own decisions about their needs. It's important that you do not rely on your preferences. You must remain unbiased. Do not make plan choices or decisions for clients. (VRPM policy 3.90)
- ✓ Do not recommend or endorse specific services, providers or products to clients.

- ✓ Use clear and basic language with clients. Give clients a chance to ask questions.
- ✓ Ask as many questions as needed to fully understand the client's circumstances. They may not always share information up-front, but let them know it's important for you to have a complete picture to help them.
- ✓ Maintain appropriate interpersonal boundaries. At no time should you engage in flirting, sexual activities or sexual contact with clients.
- ✓ When a client is not literate, or has problems understanding your primary language, take steps to help them. This may include providing them with a detailed verbal explanation or having a qualified interpreter present. When possible, give written materials in their native language.
- ✓ When a client displays cognitive impairment, or seems to have trouble understanding, make sure a family member or guardian helps them with the decision-making process.
- ✓ When in doubt about a client's mental state, immediately inform your volunteer coordinator. The volunteer coordinator should address the issue with the client, the client's next-of-kin or legal guardian, if there is one. Be sure to get permission from the client before talking to next-of-kin or a legal guardian.
- ✓ It will always be a delicate situation when you aren't sure if the client understands what they're doing. SHIBA volunteers may ask about the client's desire for access to help or a caregiver, and then refer the client to an appropriate social services agency.
- ✓ Use accurate and respectful language in written or verbal communications to or about clients.
- ✓ When client questions are beyond your level of expertise or program scope, refer them to another SHIBA volunteer, SHIBA staff or outside agency with appropriate knowledge or scope.
- ✓ Follow the counseling steps to working with clients in the next section.

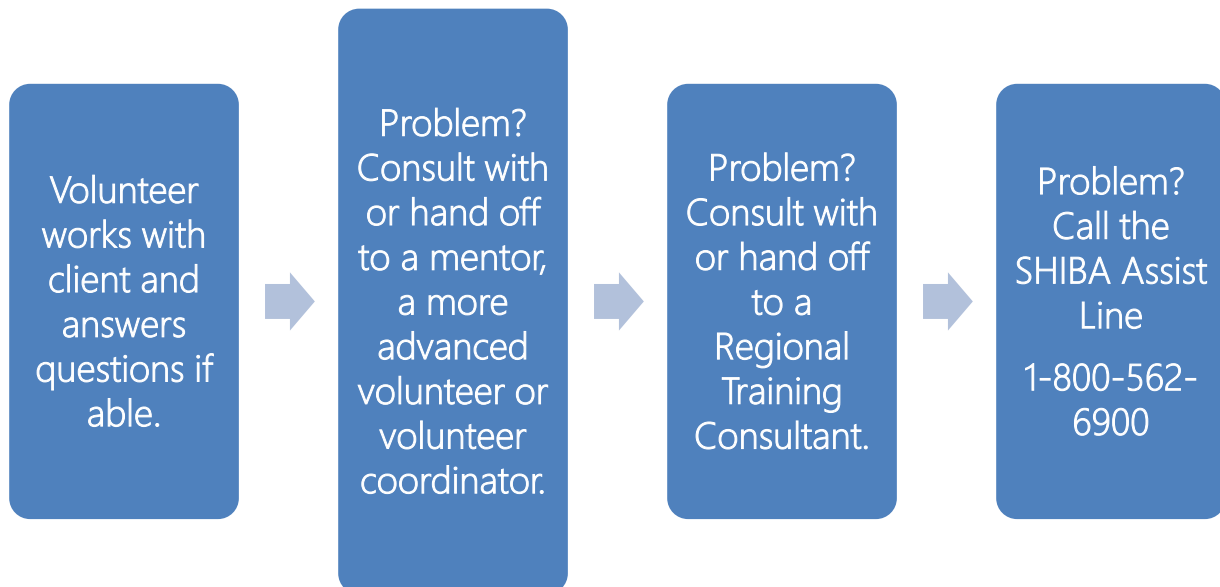
Working with clients: Medicare assistance process

Here's the **assistance process** we recommend you follow when helping clients *(also see diagram for the process below)*:

1. Volunteer advisor helps client by asking for and collecting the following information: Who, what, where, when, why and other details about what occurred.
2. If there is a problem with assisting the client, consult with or hand off to a mentor, a more advanced volunteer or your volunteer coordinator.
3. If you hit a road block and need additional help, consult with your regional training consultant (RTC). Your RTC will provide you with guidance or if it's a complicated issue, they'll take it on.

If there's still a problem, or you need an answer quickly, call the Office of the Insurance Commissioner's Hotline at 1-800-562-6900 and tell the customer service staff you have an urgent call for SHIBA assistance. The hotline staff will direct your call to Tumwater SHIBA staff assigned to take calls (your call may go to a special voice mail box where staff frequently check the messages).

Medicare assistance process



SHIBA volunteer home visits

We take the safety and reputation of our volunteers very seriously. **Our volunteers do not perform home visits or counsel clients in their own homes.** (VRPM policy 2.5)

At no time should you ever go into the home of a client or have a client in your home, even if you're accompanied by another volunteer or a paid staff member who is authorized to make the visit. **As a volunteer, you are not protected by the OIC in this activity.** We require you provide the service over the phone or in a public location to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone.

When a request comes in to the sponsoring organization for a home visit, your volunteer coordinator or the person who received the request will decide the best plan of action for the client. They'll base their decision on available resources in the community, such as paid senior information and assistance staff, a Department of Social and Health Services case manager, paid Aging and Long Term Care staff, etc.

Face-to-face work with individual clients takes place primarily at your local SHIBA sponsor location(s). When clients are unable to travel to your sponsor's office, volunteers should discuss alternate meeting arrangements with their volunteer coordinator to maintain client privacy.

Volunteers cannot provide off-site counseling without prior approval. Where one-to-one information is requested by a participant at a public presentation, SHIBA volunteers provide only general information and do not gather personal, financial or other confidential information from the client. Inquiries that involve collecting personal, financial or other confidential information are referred for a more formal and private counseling session at the sponsor office. (VRPM policy 2.6)

Services to Limited-English speaking and hearing impaired clients

We make every effort to help people from all walks of life regardless of their primary language or disabilities. To provide the best service, please follow these steps:

- Use a bilingual volunteer from your team or another SHIBA team, if they're willing and available.

- For over-the-phone counseling, use the Language Link services for help with interpreting. You can also use Language Link to set appointments with clients. It can be used via speaker phone for people who are in a SHIBA office (face-to-face). For More information go to:
<https://www.insurance.wa.gov/language-link-services>
- Get the help of other groups that offer language resources or native speakers.
- Ask a family member or friend of the client to help only as a last resort.

Additional resources

1-800-MEDICARE (English and Spanish)

Contact 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for general Medicare information, ordering Medicare booklets and information about health plans. English-and Spanish-speaking customer service representatives at this number can answer questions about the Original Medicare plan and provide current information about the health plans available in your area.

Interpretation and hearing-impaired services

1-800-MEDICARE Customer service representatives (CSR) are also able to access over-the-phone interpretation services in most languages. The caller should say “Agent” and request the interpreter when the CSR answers. Hearing-impaired clients can call Medicare with the TTY number: 1-877-486-2048.

Next steps: Attend required monthly continuing education

As a part of the Path to certification and after being certified, SHIBA requires most volunteers to attend monthly continuing education training classes at their sponsor’s site. Volunteers with limited roles, such as administrative support, may not be required to attend. Check with your volunteer coordinator or regional training consultant. These training sessions consist of up to three hours of monthly classroom instruction and discussion. Volunteer coordinators also have time on the agenda to share local information.

- All certified Medicare counseling volunteers must attend a minimum of eight monthly training classes per year (in-person or online) to remain in “active” status.

- No monthly volunteer training is scheduled in August, November or December to accommodate volunteers' vacation schedules.
- Volunteers who are not able to attend a training can make up training by viewing the training online. Volunteers must consult with their volunteer coordinator to ensure make-up sessions are properly tracked. Volunteers should not make it a habit to use make-up sessions in place of regular monthly training when it is available in-person.
- SHIBA breaks the trainings down in to three components called "continuing (CE) education." The training packets include:
 - **Core training** – Focus on any changes and new information related to Medicare.
 - **CE training** – Broadens the sponsors' and volunteers' focus in their primary areas of SHIBA business.
 - **National training** – Incorporate national information in our packets when necessary. Any Washington state-specific information will have priority.

SHIBA has established minimum initial and ongoing volunteer training requirements. They involve the delivery of a volunteer training program tailored to specific volunteer roles. Volunteers must fulfill mandatory training requirements before any work is assigned. (VRPM policy 3.56)

Volunteers who don't meet the required continuing education requirements for their role are respectfully removed from service in that role. (VRPM policy 3.62)

From time to time, SHIBA management may add or subtract the number of monthly training sessions based on resources, weather or other limiting factors.

SHIBA's goal is to promote and encourage volunteer participation in distant e-learning.

Supervision and performance management

SHIBA has both the right and the obligation to provide supervision and support to manage the work volunteers do, and to determine the nature and extent of supervisory guidance provided to volunteers. (VRPM policy 3.67)

- Volunteer coordinators advise volunteers about the volunteer performance management system during their initial orientation with SHIBA. (VRPM policy 3.66)
- Volunteer coordinators provide volunteers with a periodic evaluation of their work. (VRPM policy 3.73)
- SHIBA and volunteer coordinators provide volunteers with all the necessary information pertinent to their work assignments. Accordingly, volunteers are included in and have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials, meetings and consumer records relevant to work assignments. (VRPM policy 3.72)
- A constructive, positive and success-oriented performance management system is in place at SHIBA. (VRPM policy 3.64)

Volunteers and paid staff partner to implement the SHIBA mission and its programs, with each having an important and complementary role to play. Each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other. Paid staff do not make unreasonable demands on volunteers or request that volunteers exceed the boundaries of the role description or the limits of their individual capacity. (VRPM policy 3.114)

SHIBA volunteer rights and responsibilities

SHIBA volunteers have certain rights and responsibilities that are good to keep in mind while volunteering.

The SHIBA program expects volunteers to perform their duties to the best of their abilities, in an objective, timely and conscientious manner. We ask volunteers to comply with the program's volunteer policies, and to remain loyal to the program's values, goals and procedures. Volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the SHIBA program, and agree that SHIBA may decide to end a volunteer's

relationship with the volunteer program or to change the nature of the volunteer's assignment when appropriate.

At all times act in a knowledgeable manner, consistent with your training and the VRPM policies (VRPM policy 3.88), which are available in the VRPM Policy Manual on [My SHIBA](#), a website accessible by SHIBA volunteers, sponsors and staff.

Below is an overview of some of your volunteer rights and responsibilities:

- Represent the SHIBA program only to the extent that your position description and role specifically authorize.
- Accept meaningful work assignments suited to your interests, talents and skills.
- Receive and participate in orientation, training, evaluation and recognition.
- Act in a professional manner that includes respecting confidences and communicating clearly.
- Work within the policies of the organization and carry out the assignments expected to the best of your ability.
- Inform your supervisor of any conflicts of interest that may arise after placement in your volunteer position.
- Report your volunteer activities in a timely manner.
- Protect the confidentiality of the program's clients.
- Report changes to your supervisor that might adversely affect your performance.
- Work in a safe, respectful harassment-free work environment.
- Receive effective supervision and constructive feedback on a regular basis.
- Receive all the pertinent information you need to perform your work assignments.
- Refuse tasks or work assignments that require you to do something you have not been trained to do.

- Enter client contact, outreach and media events in the official SHIBA data systems.

The list above shows many, but not all, of the rights and responsibilities for SHIBA program volunteers.

Below are the VRPM policies you can refer to regarding volunteer rights and responsibilities:

Opportunities to volunteer are publicized broadly and through a variety of methods to ensure that no one or any group is excluded due to limited distribution of information. (VRPM policy 3.24)

Each volunteer will be assigned to a volunteer coordinator who is responsible for direct supervision and support of that volunteer. (Policy 3.70)

After SHIBA accepts someone to serve as a volunteer, the volunteer agrees to accept supervision and support from designated supervisory personnel. (VRPM policy 3.69)

SHIBA expects volunteers to be reliable and punctual. If a volunteer will be absent from a scheduled duty, it's up to that volunteer to inform their volunteer coordinator as far in advance as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made. It's not the volunteer's responsibility or right to find or assign an alternate volunteer to perform their work. (VRPM policy 3.97)

Volunteer coordinators clearly communicate role boundaries to volunteers. Volunteers must recognize and respect the limits of their skills and abilities, and the boundaries and limitations of their role. (VRPM policy 3.89)

Volunteers who do not adhere to SHIBA rules, policies or procedures, or who repeatedly fail to satisfactorily perform a volunteer assignment despite supervisory support and other corrective action interventions, are subject to dismissal by SHIBA. (VRPM policy 3.77)

SHIBA has a corrective action review and appeals procedure in place. Volunteer coordinators make volunteers aware of the appeals procedure when accepted into volunteer service. (VRPM policy 3.81)

Volunteer coordinator responsibilities

Each SHIBA volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct volunteer management. This supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and is available to the volunteer for consultation and help when necessary. If you have questions about your volunteer duties, check first with your volunteer coordinator.

Probationary period

SHIBA places all new volunteers on a three-month probationary period after they complete their initial training and are working in a role. Adjustments are made wherever appropriate, including possible placement into a different volunteer role that better suits the person. (Policy 3.41)

If during the probationary period either party decides that SHIBA volunteer work is not appropriate, they can immediately terminate without prior notice or reason. Probationary status also applies to volunteers who've been reassigned to new SHIBA roles. (VRPM policy 3.41)

Volunteer records maintenance

SHIBA uses a screening documentation process that lays out what documentation is created, how long it's retained, and when to destroy it. (VRPM policy 3.42)

- ✓ SHIBA staff maintain records on each SHIBA volunteer who has been activated in the SHIP Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) as a resource.
- ✓ SHIBA staff maintains a system of records on each volunteer, including but not necessarily limited to:
 - Current contact information
 - Application and related information gathered in the screening process
 - Background check
 - SHIBA STARS online resource record
 - Volunteer agreement
 - SHIBA volunteer certificate
 - Dates of service

- Position(s) held
 - Training and orientation received
 - Duties performed and achievements attained
 - Performance records including any corrective action plans or other correspondence (VRPM policy 3.9)
 - Record of exit
- ✓ With reasonable notice, volunteers may examine the contents of their own personnel file. Contact admin4shiba@oic.wa.gov for more information. (VRPM policy 3.10)
 - ✓ SHIBA carefully protects the confidentiality of information collected during volunteer screening. It **may be shared** with SHIBA staff as needed in deciding volunteer suitability. (VRPM policy 3.43)
 - ✓ The volunteer coordinator documents volunteer performance evaluations and places them in the volunteer's personnel file. (VRPM policy 3.74)
 - ✓ Volunteer coordinators are responsible for the timely submission of all necessary paperwork. (VRPM policy 3.75)
 - ✓ When a volunteer departs from SHIBA, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new role, the volunteer coordinator provides written notice to the necessary parties.(VRPM policy 3.79)

The SHIBA scope

SHIBA expects all volunteers to act within the parameters of the volunteer handbook and VRPM policies. SHIBA provides unbiased and confidential services. As a volunteer, you must refer cases that are outside of your expertise to the appropriate SHIBA staff person or partner agency.

It's important that SHIBA volunteers, sponsors and staff provide the same level of service across the state to ALL clients and to work within the program's service scope. It's also important to know when to ask for help for questions you cannot answer and when to refer a client to a colleague or another agency.

SHIBA:

- Helps people **navigate** Medicare and understand their coverage options.
- Sends people with problems to the right place to get help.
- Helps people be their own best advocate.
- Screens and refers people to apply for programs such as:
 - Medicaid
 - Medicare Savings Program (MSP)
 - Extra Help

Unless specifically stated, volunteer policies apply to all volunteers in all SHIBA programs and projects. This includes volunteer involvement that's organized and managed by sponsor organizations. (VRPM policy 1.2)

All volunteer roles conform to SHIBA's mission and scope. SHIBA recruits volunteers to broaden and extend its services to clients. Applying for a volunteer position does not automatically ensure someone becomes a volunteer. As a volunteer applicant, you must also fulfill all screening, orientation and training requirements before the program will accept you into service.

For more information about volunteer roles and length of service, be sure to consult your SHIBA volunteer coordinator. (VRPM Policies 3.5, 3.12 and 3.19)

Duties within a Medicare counselor volunteer's scope

- Help people navigate Medicare and understand their coverage options.

- Screen clients' eligibility for various health care coverage options including Medicare, private health insurance, low-income programs and COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act).
- Refer clients to apply for Medicaid and related programs such as Medicare Savings Program (MSP) and Extra help.
- Provide clients and community members with unbiased information about Medicare and health insurance options.
- Advise clients about points to think about with regard to their Medicare and health insurance options.
- Educate the community about Medicare fraud identification and prevention.
- Counsel and/or enroll clients in Medicare programs and plans when eligible and appropriate.
- Assist low-income clients with researching prescription and co-insurance options.
- Intake fraud information from clients but do *not* investigate fraud. These complaints will be forwarded to the appropriate agency or SHIBA staff.
- Send people to the right place to get help.
- We help people be their own best advocate.

***You can also help your clients by letting them know about the
OIC's statewide toll-free
Insurance Consumer Hotline at: 1-800-562-6900.***

***A free service, clients can get help with all types of insurance,
such as home, auto, health, life, disability coverage,
long-term care and even annuities.***

They can also get more information at: www.insurance.wa.gov

Duties NOT within a volunteer's scope

- Investigating fraud.
- Advising on other retiree plans outside of Medicare.
- Telling a client what decisions they should make.

Refusing volunteer assignments

SHIBA expects volunteers to refuse work when assignments:

- Exceed the parameters of the volunteer role description.
- Require the volunteer to perform a function they haven't yet been trained on or aren't qualified to do.
- Exceed the limits of their individual capacity. (VRPM policy 3.16)

SHIBA volunteers provide referrals

Volunteers give referrals to clients for other state agency partners, programs and services such as:

- Department of Social Health Services
- Health Care Authority
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- TRICARE
- Washington Healthplanfinder
- Social Security Administration
- Medicare
- Washington State Health Insurance Pool
- Medicaid (Apple Health)

Celebrating SHIBA volunteers

Self-care

As a SHIBA volunteer, you have a responsibility to your clients. You also have a responsibility to yourself! Always remember:

- You're doing the best you can, even though you can't solve all problems.
- Your work is not always easy.
- Discuss emotional or stressful interactions with your volunteer coordinator. Don't bottle your feelings up!
- Know how important your work is to promote healthy communities.
- You don't have to accept abuse from anyone while performing your duties.

Recognition



Our volunteers play an essential role in the mission of the SHIBA program. We depend on volunteers to help educate consumers, deliver information to the public and further SHIBA outreach in our communities.

We hope the gratitude of your clients, the sponsor staff and OIC staff will help you feel that your contributions and commitment to SHIBA are recognized and appreciated. The number of people

who come to you for advice and guidance show that your knowledge and expertise are valued and needed.

We appreciate you every day! We know how much time and effort goes into being a SHIBA volunteer. Awards and recognition events are our way of thanking you and encouraging you to continue to serve with us. We recognize our volunteers locally on special occasions and in day-to-day activities.

Annually, SHIBA recognizes its volunteers during April – usually during your scheduled volunteer monthly continuing education training meeting. (VRPM policy 3.6)

SHIBA policies and procedures

Introduction

Volunteering with SHIBA can be an extremely rewarding experience. Our volunteers provide a valuable service that our communities know they can count on. As a team, we're held to the same standards as other OIC employees. We all represent the OIC, whether we're paid staff or unpaid volunteers.

Over the years, our network of volunteers, staff and community partners have built a reputation for sharing information that is accurate, complete and unbiased, and at no cost to our clients.

SHIBA policies guiding volunteer program management apply equally to all SHIBA volunteers, and complying with these policies is required to continue as a SHIBA volunteer. (VRPM policy 3.1)

SHIBA strives to develop a volunteer population that mirrors the diversity of the community in which it operates. (VRPM policy 3.2)

We welcome you to our community and hope you'll support and abide by SHIBA policies to ensure we provide the best possible service to the public.

VRPM

SHIBA requires its volunteers to use and be familiar with the Volunteer Handbook and all other associated training tools. SHIBA provides training on the Volunteer Handbook and VRPM policies. These materials are available on My SHIBA at www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba.

Not knowing a policy is not acceptable if SHIBA communicated the policy to the volunteer. It's the volunteer's responsibility to be aware of and follow policies.

SHIBA expects volunteers to conduct their work with a view of the bigger picture of what's best for the majority of SHIBA clients, the integrity of the SHIBA program and its long-term reputation and sustainability. (VRPM policy 1.3)

Compliance with all SHIBA volunteer policies is expected of all SHIBA volunteers. Processes are in place to assist a volunteer if there is a failure to comply. Should

reasonable efforts on the part of SHIBA prove unsuccessful, further disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including dismissal. (VRPM policy 1.3)

Representing SHIBA

As a volunteer, you're an OIC representative when you perform your SHIBA duties. You are not a spokesperson for SHIBA in a formal sense (such as the SHIBA program manager serving in an official designated capacity) and should not represent yourself as such. (VRPM policy 3.91) We ask you to conduct yourself in a professional manner and to respect all clients, sponsors, partners, staff and other volunteers.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information clients share with us and the important decisions they must make based on the information we share with them, it's vital you uphold all SHIBA policies and procedures.

SHIBA volunteers are honest. We never participate in, condone or associate with dishonesty, fraud or deception.

Public appearance

We ask all volunteers to use their best judgment in maintaining an appropriate appearance when meeting with the public. As a SHIBA representative, volunteers are responsible for presenting a good image to clients and to the community. Volunteers should dress appropriately for the conditions and the nature of their volunteer duties, maintaining a high standard of personal appearance, hygiene and grooming at all times. (VRPM policy 3.95)

Please wear your SHIBA name badge when you volunteer so others can easily identify you. Your volunteer coordinator can help you get a SHIBA picture ID badge. Use the identification only when you're officially volunteering for SHIBA. (VRPM policy 3.92)

If you decide to quit or retire, you must turn in your SHIBA ID badge to your volunteer coordinator.

Conflict of interest

As a volunteer, you cannot have a conflict of interest in connection with your SHIBA work – whether personal, philosophical or financial. Volunteers may not

promote any personal or business interest while volunteering for SHIBA. An example of someone with an inherent conflict of interest would be a SHIBA volunteer who receives compensation for enrolling beneficiaries in a specific insurance plan or plans. (VRPM policy 3.35)

SHIBA is an information and referral service only. **We do not provide legal or health care advice, or endorse specific products or services.** We do not provide case management services or resolve provider-related issues. You may make client referrals to other agencies or private-sector entities; however, you may not endorse their services or products.

SHIBA does not promote, advertise or endorse public or private sector products and services in its materials or on its web pages. SHIBA does not control or endorse the content of websites or organizations with which it associates.

The following guidelines will help you understand and prevent any implied or unintentional endorsement of private-sector entities and include some things you need to know about conflict of interest.

- Avoid situations that invite a conflict or the appearance of a conflict with your volunteer work.
- Avoid situations that undermine the confidence of OIC-regulated industries.
- You must not have any interest (financial or otherwise), directly or indirectly, in an insurance company, other than as a policyholder.
- You must not engage in a business transaction or professional activity that conflicts with the business of SHIBA or the OIC.
- You must not have an active insurance license to sell insurance.
- You must disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- You must notify your volunteer coordinator or regional training consultant immediately of any new situations or changed circumstances involving an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

You may not participate in any political, campaign or lobbying activities while representing SHIBA during volunteer hours. While on SHIBA duty, volunteers do not:

- Publicly express their personal opinions about political issues
- Display or distribute political signs or materials either on themselves, such as a button or sticker, or at any work site
- Solicit or accept contributions for political purposes during volunteer hours. (VRPM policy 3.106)

You must refrain from partnering with or referring to specific insurance agents, brokers or plans.

Accepting compensation, gifts, gratuities and honoraria

As a SHIBA volunteer, you cannot directly or indirectly ask for, give, receive or agree to receive any compensation, gift, reward or tip from any source except from the state of Washington or your sponsor agency for your volunteer service. You cannot ask for a fee or other compensation for providing services to clients. You also cannot use your status in the program for personal gain or private advantage.

- ✓ SHIBA volunteers do not accept gifts from clients, their families, caregivers or other representatives. You must respectfully and tactfully decline any such offerings. If needed, you may cite this policy as the basis for declining. (VRPM policy 3.100)
- ✓ SHIBA volunteers must respectfully and tactfully decline any honoraria they are offered or offered on behalf of SHIBA. If needed, you may cite this policy as the basis for declining. (VRPM policy 3.101)
- ✓ SHIBA volunteers do not enter into financial transactions with beneficiaries/clients and their family members or caregivers – either lending or borrowing in either direction. (VRPM policy 3.105)

Confidentiality

SHIBA volunteers are responsible for protecting private information obtained while volunteering. You must not disclose to unauthorized people any

confidential information you acquire through official duties. You must not use such information for personal gain or benefit, or for the gain or benefit of others.

Feel free to ask for help before you release any personal information. It's always better to ask for help beforehand than to make a mistake.

If you accidentally release confidential material to an unauthorized person or entity, you must promptly attempt to correct the situation. If you think you may have released something inappropriately, ***immediately inform your supervisor***. Your supervisor may contact, or ask you to contact, the receiving person or organization. You or your supervisor must request the receiving person or organization to return the released material and agree not to use or re-release the information. Most likely, the receiving person or organization will promptly agree.

As a volunteer you are responsible for:

- Maintaining the confidentiality of all sensitive, confidential, proprietary or privileged information.
- Taking all the necessary steps to safeguard the confidentiality of all SHIBA- and client-related information, and to prevent personal client information from falling into the possession of unauthorized people.
- Ensuring you do not disclose any information you collect or obtain through your SHIBA work other than when it's clearly approved by an authorized SHIBA representative. There is zero tolerance for breaching confidentiality in connection with any SHIBA work. (VRPM policy 3.94)
- Immediately notifying your supervisor if you misplace, lose or if someone stole information, files or data so SHIBA can appropriately notify the affected clients and authorities, and can institute the appropriate future safeguards. (VRPM Policies 3.94, 4.3)

Reporting time

SHIBA requires volunteers to complete all client/beneficiary reporting in an accurate, truthful and timely fashion. We're held accountable for the work we do and for the grant funds we receive. Your data helps SHIBA demonstrate your valuable contributions. You should take reasonable steps to ensure your

documentation is accurate and reflects the services you provided. (VRPM policy 3.96)

SHIBA requires all volunteers to track the time they spend on SHIBA activities each month. Track the time you spend counseling clients in STARS. You should also track other volunteer activities, such as attending meetings, outreach events and travel. Verify the correct tracking procedures with your volunteer coordinator.

SHIBA uses all of the data it collects to report its activities to SHIBA funding sources, and to track and acknowledge our volunteers' efforts and time statewide.

Using SHIBA resources

You can only use SHIBA resources (including the SHIBA name and your status as a volunteer) for official purposes to fulfill your volunteer duties. You **cannot** use SHIBA resources for:

- Any campaigns for people running for an elected office, or to promote or oppose a ballot proposition.
- Any conduct that federal or state law, rule or OIC policy prohibits.
- Any efforts to lobby the state legislature, Congress or the head of a state or federal agency.
- Commercial uses, such as advertising or selling; or supporting, promoting the interest of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group, except what law, rule or policy allows.

SHIBA sponsors provide volunteers with training on how to operate any work-related equipment and are responsible just as paid staff are, for the safe use and maintenance of SHIBA equipment and materials. (VRPM policy 3.103)

Any volunteer who suspects or knows about any improper use of SHIBA resources, should report it right away to a SHIBA volunteer coordinator or a regional training consultant.

Using social media

The OIC monitors all social media platforms it creates and uses. The OIC reserves the right to remove any comments posted on its social media accounts that contain prohibited content regarding OIC-related activities including SHIBA.

SHIBA volunteers should responsibly use social media. (VRPM policy 4.5)

Volunteer's personal social media accounts:

- Volunteers have the right to establish and maintain personal social media accounts outside of volunteer work hours using personal, non-state-owned equipment and resources. Activities on these personal social media accounts will not be grounds for disciplinary action unless the activities are a conflict of interest per RCW 42.52 or are detrimental to the volunteer's work performance or to the OIC or SHIBA.
- Volunteers who choose to list their SHIBA affiliation on a personal social media site cannot represent opinions on behalf of the OIC or SHIBA. (VRPM policy 4.5)

Information technology

Volunteers must comply with SHIBA sponsor information technology policies if they use sponsor-owned computers to conduct SHIBA business. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Maintaining and protecting sensitive and confidential data to which you have access and/or responsibility for.
- Securing sensitive and confidential data, such as Social Security numbers, Medicare I.D. numbers, medical history, addresses, phone numbers, date of birth, etc.
- Prohibiting and saving confidential data to removable media, such as USB drives, CD/DVD media external hard drives, etc., unless the sponsor's volunteer coordinator authorizes you.

SHIBA expects volunteers to communicate in a professional and appropriate manner. You must not use electronic communication to solicit funds or for political messages, harassing messages or personal use.

The U.S. Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living and the state of Washington may consider electronic data as its property and as public records (which are disclosable under Washington state law).

Volunteers must immediately report lost or stolen equipment or confidential client data.

When entering client, outreach or media data to the SHIBA data systems, whether using sponsor or personal computers, SHIBA requires volunteers to get trained and certified in the appropriate data system and comply with the required policies for use and access. This includes taking training on data security safeguarding procedures.

Volunteers must turn over confidential paperwork to a volunteer coordinator or sponsor who must shred any paper documents after the client information is entered in the data systems.

All volunteers who enter client, outreach and media data in SHIBA data systems, and/or maintain a Medicare Unique I.D. number, must establish a non-personal email (using SHIBA's specifications) for SHIBA business purposes.

SHIBA email addresses

Some volunteers will use an agency-specific email provided by the sponsor for SHIBA business. If not, be aware if you use your personal email address, it may be subject to public disclosure requests, which may mean releasing unwanted personal information.

If you choose to create an email account specifically for use for SHIBA correspondence and applications, SHIBA suggests the following format:

- Jane Marie Smith appears as: janesshiba@gmail.com or yahoo.com; etc.
- If you receive a message "This name is already in use," please add your middle initial: janemsshiba@email.com

Please note: If you change your email address at a later date, you'll need to let your volunteer coordinator know as soon as possible. This will prevent any loss of communication or inability to access SHIBA applications.

All SHIBA volunteers must:

- Maintain and protect all sensitive and confidential data you have access to and/or responsibility for.
- Complete the OIC Security Awareness training when included during volunteer training.
- Secure sensitive and confidential data including but not limited to: Social Security numbers, medical history, addresses, phone numbers, etc.
- Use encrypted email when sending sensitive and confidential data, unless otherwise authorized. For questions about encrypted email, consult your volunteer coordinator.
- Not save confidential data to removable media unless otherwise authorized by designated SHIBA staff. Removable media includes, but is not limited to: USB drives, CD/DVD media and external hard disks.

These email policies apply to all SHIBA volunteers. Electronic communication systems, including phones, e-mail, voicemail, faxes and Internet, are available to conduct SHIBA business in a timely and efficient manner. All volunteer communications must be professional and appropriate. Volunteers must not use electronic communications for personal use or to solicit funds, political messages or harassing messages. In addition, all electronic data are the property of the OIC and may be considered public record. (VRPM policy 4.1)

Working with friends and relatives

We discourage SHIBA volunteers from working on relatives' or friends' insurance complaints or issues while performing SHIBA duties.

You should refer questions from professional colleagues, relatives or friends to your volunteer coordinator or another SHIBA volunteer for resolution.

- Volunteer relationships with clients have the same boundaries as those between paid staff and clients. It's appropriate to be friendly, courteous and caring, but it's not appropriate to become friends with clients, their family members or others connected to the delivery of service.

- Friendships with clients can lead to unclear boundaries, inappropriate expectations, the appearance of favoritism or exploitation and conflicts of interest. (VRPM policy 3.104)
- SHIBA volunteers should decline client invitations to spend personal time together or to engage in anything other than SHIBA business. You can decline respectfully and, if needed, cite this policy.
- Volunteers treat all clients with courtesy and respect. SHIBA expects you to respect the personal boundaries of clients and govern your physical behaviors accordingly. (VRPM policy 3.104)

Impartiality

SHIBA volunteers should not engage in political activities, religious matters, business dealings or community issues during volunteer hours. This includes the display of political signs or materials on desks, in work spaces or at counseling sites. (VRPM policy 3.93)

You may not solicit or accept contributions for a political purpose during volunteer hours. “Political purpose” means a candidate, political committee, ballot issue or cause.

You cannot sell, recommend or endorse any specific insurance or medical product, insurance agent or company, or promote religious or political beliefs, perspectives or practices. (VRPM policy 3.93)

As a SHIBA volunteer, you cannot engage in lobbying, campaigning or attempts to influence legislation. You may not use your status as a SHIBA volunteer to publicly express personal opinions or endorse any product or service during your work hours as a SHIBA volunteer.

If approved by the OIC, you may provide information on prospective or current legislation in certain situations. You may also provide information or respond to questions or inquiries from the public or elected officials, if it’s part of your official SHIBA duties.

Labor disputes

When a worksite is affected by a labor dispute, the volunteer coordinator, in consultation with the SHIBA program manager, decides if it's appropriate for volunteers to continue their duties at the SHIBA worksite and/or in alternate settings. (VRPM policy 3.108)

When it's decided where volunteers may continue their duties, no pressure or judgment is placed on volunteers who choose not to volunteer for the duration of the dispute. If you decide to stay involved during a labor dispute, you should only perform your regularly assigned duties. No one should ask you to perform any additional duties. (VRPM policy 3.108)

Non-discrimination and anti-harassment

The OIC will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or intimidation of any kind. SHIBA is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all personnel and clients. SHIBA expects all volunteers to comply with these policies and to take appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur. Through enforcement of these policies and educating volunteers, the OIC will seek to prevent, correct and discipline behavior that violates these policies.

- No one has to put up with harassment for any reason, at any time. No one has the right to harass anyone else—in the SHIBA workplace or in any situation related to SHIBA programs and services.
- SHIBA treats all complaints about harassment seriously, whether they're made informally or formally. SHIBA takes action on all complaints to ensure they're resolved quickly, confidentially and fairly. SHIBA will take corrective action with anyone who harasses someone or a group of people.
- All SHIBA volunteer coordinators have a responsibility to stop harassment. Everything is done to stop it as soon as it's detected, whether or not someone made a complaint. (VRPM policy 3.98)
- SHIBA trains volunteers in the norms of identified consumer groups/cultures. Because excellent communication is a key to success in most SHIBA volunteer roles, we place volunteers according to their ability to communicate effectively with clients from diverse populations. (VRPM policy 3.107)

- Volunteer roles are open to community members of all ages, regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ancestry, mental or physical disability, medical condition, political activity, marital status, or age. The sole qualification for volunteer assignment to a specific role is suitability to perform a task on behalf of SHIBA. (VRPM policy 3.22)

Minors

SHIBA staff and sponsors want volunteers whose skills, abilities and personal goals are compatible with the goals and mission of our program. Minors, under age 18, may volunteer with the SHIBA program with parental consent. SHIBA will assign appropriate duties and supervision depending on their individual maturity level. Appropriate roles will have clearly prescribed responsibilities well suited to young people, and will occur in a supervised and non-hazardous environment and comply with all child labor laws. (VRPM policy 3.23)

Associated definitions

Discrimination – The act of favoritism or making a difference in the treatment of someone based on their race, creed, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender, identity/expression, familial status, marital status, physical or mental disability or veteran’s status.

Gender expression/identity – Having, or perceived by others as having, a gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior or expression different from that traditionally associated with the sex assigned to a person at birth.

Harassment – Verbal or physical conduct that degrades or shows hostility or aversion toward someone due to their race, creed, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, familial status, marital status, disability or any other characteristic protected by law, and that the purpose is to:

- Create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- Unreasonably interfere with someone’s work performance.
- Otherwise adversely affect someone’s employment opportunities.

Normal, courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions between employees, sponsors or volunteers, which are acceptable to and welcomed by both parties, is not considered harassment or sexual harassment.

Intimidation – This is a form of harassment that, while not prohibited by anti-discrimination laws, involves verbal or physical conduct that demonstrates:

- Hostility or aversion toward someone
- Threats
- Offensive behavior
- Efforts to humiliate or insult someone
- Interfering with the work performance of another employee, sponsor or volunteer
- Any improper behavior that adversely impacts the mental or physical well-being of an employee, sponsor and/or volunteer

Sexual harassment – This involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when one or more of the following occurs:

- This conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's volunteerism.
- Submitting to or rejecting this conduct by an individual is used as a basis for volunteering decisions.
- The purpose of this conduct is to interfere with someone's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual orientation – Heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and gender expression or identity.

Prohibited conduct

It's a violation to create discriminatory work conditions, or to use discriminatory evaluative standards for volunteering based in whole or in part, on someone's:

- Race
- Creed

- Color
- Religion
- Gender
- National origin
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identify or expression
- Familial status
- Physical or mental disability
- Veteran status

Intimidation constitutes prohibited conduct even if the activity does not constitute a violation of the anti-discrimination or harassment laws.

Appropriate corrective or disciplinary actions taken by a supervisor do not constitute intimidation.

Sexual harassment in any form is prohibited under this policy. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors, and may involve people of the same or different gender. Sexual harassment does not refer to behavior or occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is unwelcome, is personally offensive, and lowers morale and therefore, interferes with work effectiveness.

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is prohibited under this policy. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Epithets
- Slurs or negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts
- Degrading jokes and display, or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that belittles or shows hostility toward an individual or group

No one may impose a hardship, loss or benefit, or penalty on a volunteer as punishment for:

- Filing or responding to a bona-fide complaint of discrimination or harassment.
- Appearing as a witness in the investigation of a complaint.
- Serving as an investigator.

Retaliation or attempted retaliation is a violation of this policy. Anyone who does so will be subject to severe sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Reporting incidents

- SHIBA expects volunteers to report all perceived incidents of discrimination, intimidation or harassment in the workplace to their immediate supervisor or the SHIBA program manager. You're not required to file your complaints with your immediate supervisor first before bringing it to the attention of the SHIBA program manager.
- If you experienced conduct you believe is contrary to this policy, you have a duty to use this reporting procedure. Failure to fulfill this reporting obligation could affect your right to pursue legal action.
- Volunteer coordinators who become aware of allegations of discrimination, intimidation, or any form of harassment should immediately notify the SHIBA program manager. This allows SHIBA to investigate the incident in a timely and confidential manner.
- If you believe you've been subjected to illegal forms of discrimination or harassment, you may file a complaint with the Washington State Human Rights Commission.
- If you believe you're being harassed, this reporting procedure does not prevent you from promptly advising the harasser that their behavior is unwelcome and request they discontinue it.
- Registering a complaint will not be used against you, and it will not have an adverse impact on your volunteer status.

Investigation

- The OIC will investigate all reported allegations of discrimination, intimidation or harassment. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, any witnesses who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

- The OIC will maintain confidentiality, including all parties and witnesses, throughout the investigation process, and will take appropriate corrective action.
- If you're involved in or observe the investigation, you should maintain confidentiality and refrain from gossip or speculation about the involved parties, the investigation or agency action on such matters.
- You must cooperate fully with the investigation process. This includes providing truthful information and maintaining confidentiality about all people involved in an investigation.
- If the OIC finds an individual has committed any form of harassment, intimidation, discrimination or retaliation against another party, their organization or vendor, they'll be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action.
- SHIBA investigates and resolves complaints from clients and other outside parties against volunteers. (VRPM policy 3.83)

Volunteer liability

- People who volunteer for a government entity are generally shielded from personal liability caused by their acts or omissions on behalf of the entity. Exceptions include deliberate misconduct, gross negligence or when the volunteer is clearly acting outside the scope of their duties when they cause harm.
- The OIC will not hold a volunteer personally liable for errors or omissions so long as they meet the following conditions:
 1. You were acting within the scope of your responsibilities for SHIBA at the time of the act or omission.
 2. If appropriate or required, you were properly certified or authorized by SHIBA for the activities or practice, which were within the scope of your responsibilities for SHIBA.
 3. You did not cause the harm due to willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual.

- If someone sues you for damages in your role as a SHIBA volunteer, you can request the Washington State Attorney General serve as your defense. If the Attorney General finds your actions were taken in good faith and were within the scope of your duties, they can provide you with a defense free of charge. If you are found liable for damages, the state pays the judgment and it cannot become a lien on your property.
- Neither state nor federal law protect volunteers from claims of sexual harassment or claims against the agency for failure to adequately train and supervise volunteers.

Liability for a volunteer's actions that exceed the scope of his or duties will potentially fall onto the OIC. The OIC must provide adequate and documented training and supervision. If a volunteer's actions are negligent and not deliberate, the OIC can be found liable. Your clear understanding of your role and limits as a volunteer is essential to avoid this kind of problem. To avoid liability, whenever you are in doubt, go to your volunteer coordinator for help.

Evaluations or feedback from sponsors and trainers

As a volunteer, you have an on-going opportunity to receive feedback from your volunteer coordinator. You will also receive on-going feedback from your regional training consultant.

- SHIBA establishes performance standards for each volunteer role. At the start of your volunteer assignment, your volunteer coordinator will provide you with a copy of the relevant performance standards. Volunteer coordinators should provide volunteer expectations at the start of your assignment. (VRPM policy 3.15)
- The volunteer coordinator conducts regular evaluations of both volunteer involvement and the infrastructure in place to support volunteer involvement in SHIBA. (VRPM policy 3.11)
- Whenever possible, volunteer coordinators provide volunteers with feedback on the results of their work, including data on volunteer contributions that allow SHIBA to meet its service goals. (VRPM policy 3.112)

Grievance procedures

It's important for you to quickly, reasonably and safely resolve any conflicts that arise with staff, other volunteers, clients or partner organizations. Don't hesitate to raise any issue by following these steps:

Step 1: Go to the person you're having the problem with and try to resolve the issue one-on-one.

Step 2: If you cannot resolve the issue in this way, talk to your volunteer coordinator to see if they can handle it at their level.

Step 3: If you need to and if it exists, follow your sponsor organization's grievance procedure.

Step 4: If the grievance is not resolved at the sponsor's level, talk to your regional training consultant.

Step 5: If necessary, the SHIBA program manager will help to resolve the matter. If the steps above don't lead to satisfactory resolution, you should contact the SHIBA program manager.

If a complaint involves your own supervisor, bring the complaint to the SHIBA program coordinator. All complaints will be treated as confidential. (VRPM policy 3.82)

Appeals

SHIBA also has an appeals procedure through which a volunteer can request review of a formal corrective action decision, including dismissal. If you have a complaint or grievance, ask your supervisor for information on filing it.

Resignation, dismissal and leaves of absence

We know our volunteers won't be with us forever. When a volunteer departs from SHIBA, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new role, the volunteer coordinator provides written notice to all necessary parties. (VRPM policy 3.79)

- Volunteers agree that SHIBA may at any time decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with SHIBA or to make changes in the nature of their volunteer assignment.
- SHIBA has the right to decide the policies that guide volunteer service with SHIBA.

- A volunteer may at any time, for any reason, decide to end their volunteer tenure with SHIBA. (VRPM policies 3.4, 3.84)

Resignation

To help us maintain continuity when you resign from volunteering, if possible, please submit a two-week advanced notice with the reason(s) why you're leaving by email or printed letter to your volunteer coordinator. In your notice, please say if you would like an exit interview by phone with the SHIBA office in Tumwater, and we will schedule one for you. Be sure to send a copy to the SHIBA program. If you send it by email, you can cc admin4shiba@oic.wa.gov when you notify your volunteer coordinator. (VRPM policy 3.84)

If you send it by U.S. mail, mail it to:

SHIBA
Attention: SHIBA Program Manager
PO BOX 40255
Olympia, WA 98504-0255

In addition to notifying your volunteer coordinator and the SHIBA program, you should finish up any client cases or work with your volunteer coordinator to assign any unfinished cases to a different volunteer to handle. You should also notify the client that a different volunteer will be handling their case. (VRPM policy 3.84)

Before you leave your volunteer position, be sure to turn in your SHIBA ID badge and all other SHIBA property or materials to your volunteer coordinator. (VRPM policy 3.84)

- Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with SHIBA at any time and for any reason.
- Volunteers who intend to resign should provide as much advance notice of their departure as possible along with the reason for their decision.
- Clients working with the volunteer should be informed in writing of the assignment of a new volunteer to their case.
- At the time of resignation, volunteers should turn in all identification and other property or materials belonging to SHIBA to their designated supervisor. (VRPM policy 3.84)

Exit Interviews

SHIBA will conduct exit interviews, when possible, with volunteers who are leaving their roles. (VRPM policy 3.86)

Volunteer dismissal

We don't often ask volunteers to leave, however, it does happen on rare occasions. When we dismiss a volunteer, we inform them that their working relationship with the SHIBA program, its services, personnel, partners and clients is irrevocably severed and all connections should cease. (VRPM policy 3.80)

SHIBA operates a work environment that is free of unacceptable behaviors. This is a zero-tolerance policy. Non-compliance is detrimental to SHIBA's reputation and proven instances of the following unacceptable behaviors are grounds for immediate dismissal. (VRPM policy 3.99) Some behaviors are so unacceptable that they are simply not tolerated at SHIBA. (VRPM policies 3.78, 3.80, 3.99)

Examples of unacceptable behavior includes, but are not limited to:

- Sexual harassment
- Physical or verbal assault or abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Misuse of state resources
- Discrimination
- Conflict of interest
- Other inappropriate behavior may also lead to dismissal on a case-by-case basis. (VRPM policy 3.78)

Volunteers do not use, possess, transfer, distribute, manufacture or sell alcohol or any illegal drug while on SHIBA property, while on duty, while operating a vehicle on duty or while driving to or from an SHIBA worksite. Volunteers taking legal medication, whether or not prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner, that affects or impairs judgment, coordination or perception so as to adversely affect ability to perform work in a safe and productive manner, notifies their supervisor prior to engaging in SHIBA work. (VRPM policy 3.99)

Leave of absence

If a volunteer would like to take a leave of absence, they should make the request to their volunteer coordinator. Leaves of absence are granted to volunteers at the discretion of the volunteer coordinator or the volunteer's supervisor.

When a volunteer departs from SHIBA (permanently or temporarily), whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new role, the volunteer coordinator will notify all necessary parties in writing. (VRPM policy 3.79)

My SHIBA

Volunteer and sponsor webpages

The volunteer and sponsor section of the Office of the Insurance Commissioner's (OIC) website is called [My SHIBA](#). If you're unable to access the Internet, please check with your volunteer coordinator. To access, go to <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/language-link-services> and click on "SHIBA volunteers only" at the bottom of any OIC webpage.

My SHIBA offers the most current information on the following topics and much more:

- STARS
- Outreach tools
- Publications
- How to order publications from the Dept. of Enterprise Services Fulfillment Center
- Training information
- Acronyms
- Contact information
- Traveling information
- Medicare Unique IDs
- News Flash

Publications and materials

SHIBA-approved materials

For quality control purposes and statewide consistency, you may only distribute to the public SHIBA- and OIC-produced and approved materials.

SHIBA public communications must only include information and images that SHIBA has formally approved. Your volunteer coordinator will contact the SHIBA communications coordinator at the main office in Tumwater about the needs of the SHIBA program.

Any reference materials you have for learning and/or use to counsel, must be from SHIBA or another authorized source such as Medicare.gov and the *Medicare & You* handbook. Volunteers must not create their own reference documents.

Publication standards

The OIC SHIBA program has the responsibility for ensuring all SHIBA publications and outreach materials meet the OIC's publication standards.

We have a SHIBA communications coordinator who writes, edits and designs all SHIBA publications. The communications coordinator consults with a team of OIC Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for accurate technical content in publications.

For more information about publications and outreach materials, read the SHIBA outreach & marketing guide on My SHIBA at: <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/media/9167>.

Volunteer training materials

Our curriculum developer writes and edits volunteer training materials. The curriculum developer also works with our SMEs to ensure the technical information in our training materials is accurate. SHIBA staff, on occasion, will pilot new training modules to SHIBA volunteer groups to ensure they're understandable and valuable.

Reporting – STARS

The SHIP Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) is the data system we use to track all of our program activities and help us pull together grant reports and fundraising requests.

Why the information is important

It shows:

- The help we offer and provide to our clients.
- How we use resources and if enough resources are available to perform goals and objectives.
- Where we need to focus to enhance overall SHIBA performance.
- Our community experiences to lawmakers and others in charge of policy decisions (both state and federal).

How STARS benefits SHIBA

- Helps us efficiently and effectively respond to client needs.
- Influences program development.
- Informs appropriate resource allocation.
- Gives us information on volunteer recruitment, management and retention.
- Indicates gaps in partnership development.
- Provides data for fund development from a variety of resources, including federal, state and local entities and foundations.
- Offers a great communication and feedback tool.

Using state resources

OIC travel reimbursement

To qualify for OIC travel reimbursement, **your travel must meet ALL of the following:**

- The SHIBA program manager or designee must pre-approve it.
- You must travel at least 50 miles one way.
- Your travel must be for SHIBA-related business, such as mileage to a special training.
- You must first pay for the travel and then turn in a Travel Expense Voucher form to the OIC for reimbursement.
- Your travel costs must be less than or equal to the state's per diem rate.

For detailed information about our travel reimbursement process, go to the My SHIBA website at: <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/travel-reimbursement>.

SHIBA Medicare News

Using an online subscription service for SHIBA Medicare News, SHIBA will send out as needed, information about training, job aid updates and other important training and counseling content updates and information to all current SHIBA volunteers and staff via email.

SHIBA News Flash

What is SHIBA News Flash?

It's an online newsletter that SHIBA staff send out with late-breaking information that may affect volunteers, clients and our work.

How can I sign up to get SHIBA News Flash?

You can join or leave the *SHIBA News Flash* distribution list at any time. There are a couple of ways to join. Pick what works best for you!

Sign yourself up:

1. Go to the My SHIBA homepage at www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba and choose the “News Flash” link under the “News and events” section.
2. Sign up in the blue box on the right side of the “SHIBA News Flash” webpage. Choose how you want to receive *SHIBA News Flash* – using the drop-down menu – either through email or text message, or both.
3. Enter your email address and/or your mobile phone number.
4. Click on the “Submit” button. You are now signed up!

How do I cancel getting SHIBA News Flash by email or text message?

At the bottom of the *SHIBA News Flash* you receive by email or text is a link to unsubscribe. Click on that link and follow the directions.

I don't use email or text messaging. How can I get copies of SHIBA News Flash?

If you request them, your volunteer coordinator can provide you with a paper copy, or you can go to the My SHIBA homepage and lookup the “News Flash” section to print off your own copy.

Workplace safety

Contacting law enforcement

Call 9-1-1 if there's an emergency or if you have reasonable cause to believe a crime's been committed.

Accidents and injuries

To provide a safe work environment, our SHIBA volunteers follow the safety standards established by the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA). <https://lni.wa.gov/>

SHIBA volunteers who witness physical, psychological, financial or verbal abuse of consumers while volunteering, should report it to their supervisor so appropriate follow-up action can occur.

For the safety of volunteers, SHIBA volunteers are not allowed to visit client homes under any circumstances. (VRPM policy 2.5)

SHIBA sponsors establish a safe and appropriate worksite for every volunteer. (VRPM policy 3.18) You're responsible for performing all your volunteer duties in a safe and efficient manner. To maintain a safe and secure work environment, we require our volunteers to comply with all local, state and federal safety and health regulations.

You're responsible for immediately reporting accidents, injuries or security incidents to your volunteer coordinator or regional training consultant. This must occur whether you're a direct participant, a witness or involved in any way with an incident. Per incident protocols, promptly following any incident, volunteers must complete an accident and injury report form. (VRPM policy 2.8)

In response to a reported incident involving SHIBA volunteers, the volunteer coordinator ensures/oversees the notification of relevant authorities (e.g., SHIBA management, police, public health, insurance, ACL, etc.) as appropriate and undertakes subsequent steps necessary to respond to and resolve the incident. (VRPM policy 2.9)

SHIBA and sponsor locations have emergency contact information for all of its volunteers – even short-term volunteers – and a procedure that enables volunteers to communicate with SHIBA or the sponsor’s supervisory personnel at any time volunteers are on duty. Response to emergency communications takes place without delay. (VRPM policies 2.10, 2.4) For procedures on how to serve clients in the event of an emergency or natural disaster, consult with your sponsor site or volunteer coordinator.

Insurance

For all SHIBA volunteers, your sponsor may provide liability and accident insurance or other comparable forms of protection. (VRPM policy 2.2)

Volunteers should notify their own auto insurance company about their SHIBA driving activities. Make sure you have coverage in place that provides you with adequate protection. If you drive your personal vehicle for SHIBA work purposes (or personal purposes), Washington state law (RCW 46.30) requires you to carry liability coverage on any vehicle you use. Volunteers are responsible for paying the cost their auto insurance. (VRPM policy 2.3)

If you have questions about whether your personal policy will cover you for certain activities, you should carefully read your auto policy to see what it does and doesn’t cover, and/or contact your insurance agent for advice.

Your volunteer coordinator will verify once a year that each volunteer who drives a vehicle as part of performing their volunteer duties has auto insurance, including liability coverage. All volunteers will sign it and it will go in their personnel file. If your auto insurance coverage lapses, you should immediately notify your supervisor. (VRPM policy 2.3)

Domestic violence

If you suspect another volunteer, staff person or client is in a domestic violence, child-abuse or elder-abuse situation, please encourage that person to contact a local domestic violence crisis center for assistance and referral. If you witness violence in the workplace, you’re encouraged to call 9-1-1 immediately and report the incident to local law enforcement authorities.

Children

In most cases, SHIBA volunteers and staff are not required by law to report suspected child abuse. If you have reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect, you may report it to law enforcement or to the Department of Social and Health Services.

Elders and disabled

SHIBA volunteers are similarly not required to report suspected elder abuse. However, as a SHIBA volunteer you're considered a "permissive reporter" because you volunteer in a program that provides services for vulnerable adults. This means you may file a report with law enforcement when you believe reasonable cause exists that a vulnerable adult is being or has been abandoned, abused, financially exploited or neglected.

Animals

Law enforcement agencies and animal care and control agencies have enforcement authority under Washington state's law to prevent cruelty to animals. There is no mandatory reporting. However, you or anyone else who suspects animal abuse may contact the local humane society or animal control agency to file a report.

VRPM policies

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- 1.2 Scope of the volunteer policies
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- 1.4 Volunteer role classifications
- 1.5 Policy revision

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* As of December 2021, these policies are not in use by SHIBA. This status can change without notice. The full text of these policies is located on [My SHIBA](#).

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LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

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