

Complaint about a SHIBA volunteer: Procedures and form with outcome

Purpose and use of this document

The purpose of this document is to create a system for receiving, reporting and documenting outside or external complaints about volunteers. It also provides a fair and consistent method to handle complaints about SHIBA volunteers as accurately, quickly and objectively as possible.

Introduction

When the sponsoring agency does not have procedures in place, use the following procedures and the **Complaint about a SHIBA volunteer: Form and outcome** on pages 7-10 of this document (also on My SHIBA at www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba).

Complaint procedures

- 1) The volunteer coordinator (or volunteer's supervisor) is designated to assume responsibility for investigating, documenting and responding to complaints and/or accusations against a volunteer.

The sponsoring agency's director will arbitrate appeals that may result from decisions made in the complaint or grievance process.

If the complaint is still not resolved, the SHIBA program manager will make the final determination in arbitrating formal written appeals that result in the complaint or grievance process. See the **SHIBA volunteer appeals procedures** on My SHIBA at www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba.

The complainant—at their discretion—has the opportunity to bypass the volunteer coordinator and sponsoring agency's director.

- 2) All staff will ensure confidentiality and safeguard information obtained during complaint investigations. That includes ensuring documents and files related to the complaint are accessible only to designated staff where necessary.
- 3) The volunteer's supervisor will establish a timeline for complaint investigation and resolution. Key points will include the following—measured in business days—from the initial receipt of the complaint:

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- a. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint (five days).
 - b. Initial investigation of complaint's validity (two weeks).
 - c. Initial findings and determination of complaint resolution (three weeks).
 - d. Review and appeal by volunteer or complainant (six weeks).
 - e. Final determination of complaint resolution (eight weeks)
- 4) Staff and volunteers, who may be in a position to receive complaints from beneficiaries and others, should direct complainants to the designated complaint handler.
 - 5) Staff and volunteers, who may be in a position to receive complaints about a volunteer, should provide the **Complaint about a SHIBA volunteer: Form with outcome** (pages 7-10 of this document) to the complainant, representative or staff member assisting the complainant, so that they can record the allegations and facts.
 - 6) Upon receipt of a complaint, the volunteer's supervisor will send a written acknowledgement to the complaining party within five days explaining the complaint procedures, probable timeline for complaint resolution and possible outcomes.
 - 7) The volunteer's supervisor will inform the volunteer of the complaint and explain the complaint procedures, probable timeline for complaint resolution and possible outcomes.
 - 8) The volunteer's supervisor will determine if an accusation or complaint has substance by interviewing the complainant and witnesses, if any, to gather facts about the incident. The supervisor will ask the complainant to describe a desirable outcome of the complaint.

Note: Determine if the complaint involves an "incident," as described in **VRPM policy 2.8, Incident reporting**, of the *Volunteer risk program management* (VRPM) manual, and whether or not the incident reporting procedures were followed. The VRPM is located on My SHIBA (www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba) and is accessible by authorized personnel with a password.

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VRPM policy 2.8: Incident reporting

Any accident or injury to or by a volunteer is reported immediately to the supervisor. An incident reporting form and protocol exists. Volunteers complete required incident (or accident and injury) reports promptly following any incident. Follow the incident reporting procedures of the sponsoring agency or locate SHIBA's incident reporting form and procedures on My SHIBA at www.insurance.wa.gov/my-shiba.

- 9) If the complaint seems to involve a simple misunderstanding, one option is to convene a meeting of the involved participants and attempt to resolve the issue by an exchange and discussion of views.
- 10) If the complaint is serious in nature, the volunteer's supervisor will provide a written summary to the complainant and witnesses of their testimony and ask them to sign and date the summary. "Serious" means any complaint that might result in the dismissal of the volunteer due to the breach of organizational rules about volunteer behavior, any possible criminal action, any action that puts a client at risk or any similar offense that goes beyond minor careless actions or accidents.

Note: Once again, VRPM policy 2.8 may come into play for complaints of a serious nature. Review that policy also, and act accordingly, if action has not already been taken.

- 11) The volunteer's supervisor will discuss the complaint or accusation with the volunteer, and identify the related policies. Gather facts from the volunteer's perspective. In serious cases, ask the volunteer to sign and date a written summary of their testimony.
- 12) The volunteer's supervisor will evaluate the volunteer's behavior in light of the VRPM performance management policies. Did they violate a policy?

The volunteer's supervisor will decide whether to initiate corrective action steps under VRPM policy 3.76: Progressive corrective action; ensure fair and equitable application of the policy.

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VRPM policy 3.76: Progressive corrective action

SHIBA has a written protocol for corrective action that includes a wide range of intervention techniques that are progressive in nature. When corrective action is necessary, it is positive, constructive, and success-oriented, designed to help volunteers whose performance and/or behavior is not meeting expectations. The seriousness of corrective action is matched to the nature of the performance issue, becoming progressively more serious with either the unacceptability of the transgression or the repeated failure by the volunteer to improve the situation.

The volunteer's supervisor will inform the complainant and volunteer of the findings and final determination to resolve the complaint.

- 13) If the corrective action involves serious measures, such as a reprimand or dismissal, the volunteer's supervisor will:
- a. Inform the volunteer of their right to appeal the determination and receive an independent review under **VRPM policy 3.81: Performance management review and appeals procedures**.

VRPM policy 3.81: Performance management review and appeals procedures

SHIBA has a corrective action review and appeals procedure in place. Volunteers are made aware of the appeals procedure upon acceptance into volunteer service.

- b. Notify the person designated to arbitrate appeals (e.g., the sponsor agency's director or SHIBA program manager or a designee) that serious corrective action measures were taken against the volunteer.

Tip: For additional information, see the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) or State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP) websites for the [Volunteer Program Management Manual](#) at: www.healthcare.oregon.gov and [Key Elements of a Formal Corrective Action Process](#) at: www.smpresource.org or by searching either the SMP (www.smpresource.org) or SHIP

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(www.shiptacenter.org) websites.

- 14) The volunteer's supervisor will document the outcome of the complaint in the volunteer's personnel file.

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Procedures for supervisors are on pages 1-5 of this document.

Form with outcome, for use by supervisors are on pages 7-10 of this document.

Complaint about a SHIBA volunteer: Form with outcome

For use by supervisors

The purpose of this form with outcome is to document a complaint about a volunteer from someone outside or external to SHIBA. This form should be completed (by anyone, though usually a staff person) and returned to the volunteer's supervisor who is usually a volunteer coordinator (VC). The supervisor will document the outcome portion of this form. Designated staff will use the **Complaint about a SHIBA volunteer: Procedures** for guidance and which are on pages 1-5 of this document.

If the VC is not available or preferable, then return this form to the sponsoring agency's director or to the SHIBA program manager.

General information

Date complaint is reported: _____
Complainant name: _____
Phone number: (____) _____
Email address: _____
Mailing address: _____

Information about the affected volunteer or organization

Name of volunteer complaint is against: _____

If a staff person is completing this form based upon information received from complainant:

Name of staff person: _____
Title: _____
Phone number: (____) _____
Email address: _____

Date(s) of incident: _____

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What is the nature of your complaint? Please describe the incident(s) that occurred that led up to your complaint or grievance:

Is anyone else involved in your complaint or grievance, such as witnesses, and if so, who are they?

Is there any documentation relevant to your complaint? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes, where can it be found?

Please add any other information that supports your complaint, if any:

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