



Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement Volunteer Opportunity: SHIBA Counselor

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) is a statewide network of trained volunteers who educate, assist and advocate for consumers about their rights and options regarding Medicare health insurance and health care access. A program of the Washington Office of the Insurance Commissioner, SHIBA volunteers provides free, unbiased, and confidential advising. Locally SHIBA is sponsored by the nonprofit Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement.

Purpose

To assist Medicare consumers, caregivers, and advocates with navigating the complex Medicare system.

Position Description

SHIBA Counselor Volunteers empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries' and their caregivers with questions and problems related to Medicare health insurance, accessing health care, and educating on fraud and abuse prevention. Through one-on-one counseling and advocacy, volunteers support the independence of people making choices, which affect their health and financial well-being.

Responsibilities

- Provide confidential/objective individual counseling to beneficiaries/representatives on Medicare and related health insurance issues
- Assess clients' coverage needs, and screen for health insurance eligibility and provide information regarding insurance options
- Advocate on behalf of beneficiaries to help them resolve Medicare and related health insurance issues
- Educate individual beneficiaries on Medicare related issues (including Medigap, Medicare Advantage, Medicare Part D and Medicare Savings Programs)
- Utilize SHIBA and Medicare related materials and resources to stay up-to-date on issues affecting Medicare beneficiaries
- Use Medicare.gov website to help clients compare prescription and/or Medicare Advantage plan options
- Make referrals to other agencies when appropriate
- Promote SHIBA services in our community

- Comply with SHIBA/WAHA policies and procedures, including those regarding confidentiality

Qualifications

- Excellent organizational and problem solving skills
- Good oral communication skills, including:
 - Ability to communicate with clients in a professional and confidential manner
 - Ability to explain complex topics in an easy-to-understand manner
 - Active listening skills and maintaining objectivity
- Ability to work and get along well with others from diverse backgrounds
- Strong computer and internet competency
- Willingness to learn and retain information
- Ability to work independently or as part of team
- Valid Washington's driver's license and access to an insured vehicle or reliable transportation

Time Commitment

Availability to volunteer requires a **minimum of eight or more hours per month**, on average 2-4 hours a week. This includes counseling hours, outreach events, continuing education, and volunteer meetings that take place each 4th Wednesday of the month. Attendance at 18-hours of initial basic training is mandatory as well as on-going training and annual review classes. Because of the training volunteers who counsel receive, they are asked to commit to a **minimum of one year** of service.

Location

Volunteers who counsel may be stationed at their local SHIBA host organization, the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement office. They may also offer one-on-one counseling at various locations throughout their local community.

Supervision

SHIBA Counselor Volunteers report to their local SHIBA coordinator.

On Site-Supervision

SHIBA Counselor Volunteers typically work independently and report their activities to their coordinator.

Orientation/Training

All SHIBA volunteers receive 18-hour basic training on Medicare health insurance, prescription drug, and healthcare access options. Volunteers who counsel beneficiaries also receive additional role-specific training.

Benefits

SHIBA Counselors will:

- Participate in a national effort to educate Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers, and the general public about Medicare health options
- Enhance their communication and interpersonal skills
- Interact with diverse group of people
- Receive recognition for their contributions to the program
- Make a contribution to the well-being of Medicare beneficiaries and the community as a whole
- Make a difference in people's lives

Contact

Volunteers are always encouraged to contact their local SHIBA coordinator for support. For full consideration for this position, please review and sign volunteer agreement, and request a SHIBA volunteer application. Contact the SHIBA program coordinator at 360-788-6534 or email waha@hinet.org

Volunteer Agreement

I acknowledge that I have read the above volunteer description and agree that it defines the position as it currently exists. I also understand that the above is intended to describe the general content of and requirements for performance of this position. It is not to be considered as an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements and does not limit the assignment of additional duties at the discretion of the supervisor.

SHIBA Volunteers do not accept gratuities in return for the services they provide.

Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____