

Volunteering with the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA)

About SHIBA volunteers

Mission statement

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) provides free, unbiased information about health care coverage and access to help improve the lives all Washington state residents. We cultivate community commitment through partnership, service and volunteering.

Who we are

- A free, unbiased health care access and information resource
- An information and counseling service for evaluating, planning and using health insurance and public health programs
- Part of the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner

SHIBA history

- In operation since 1979
- Started by a volunteer in Skagit County
- First program of its kind in the nation
- Recognized nationally as a model for health insurance consumer counseling
- Inspired federal funding to create State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) in all states
- More than 400 volunteers statewide
- Twenty-one local sponsoring agencies representing all 39 counties

SHIBA provides information to consumers via volunteers who are not professionals, but are trained by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner. Volunteers act in good faith, without selling, recommending or endorsing any specific insurance product, agent or company.

We offer volunteers many rewarding ways to contribute to the community and assist consumers with all kinds of health insurance problems. You learn a lot, make a big difference and get recognized for it.

Benefits of volunteering

- Contribute to make Washington state healthier.
- Gain skills, improve knowledge of Medicare, health insurance, prescription drugs and other resources for you, your family and your community.
- Socialize with other people who care.
- Improves physical and mental health, and greater life satisfaction in people age 60 or older.
- Lowers the rate of depression
- Live a longer life

SHIBA volunteer screening and process

SHIBA staff and sponsors seek volunteers whose skills, abilities and personal goals are compatible with the goals and mission of our program. Minors (under age 18) may volunteer with parental consent. We will assign them appropriate duties and supervision in light of their individual maturity levels.

Note: You cannot volunteer with SHIBA if you have any interest (financial or otherwise), directly or indirectly, in an insurance company, other than as a policyholder.

Everyone applying to become a SHIBA volunteer must complete the following:

- Volunteer application
- Volunteer agreement
- Resource record
- Washington State Patrol background check
- Confidentiality agreement

You must also:

- Participate in the screening and selection process that includes an interview with the sponsor.
- Provide three references from former or current supervisors of employment, volunteer activities or other credible sources.
- Take the Basic training as soon as your background check is complete.
- Take other training appropriate to your chosen role.

At anytime during the application process, the potential volunteer, sponsor and/or Office of the Insurance Commissioner staff have the right to decide if SHIBA is the right fit for the volunteer applicant.

To volunteer for SHIBA, call 1-800-562-6900 or go to www.insurance.wa.gov/shiba and request a SHIBA volunteer application.

