

# SHIBA Volunteer Handbook

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**MIKE KREIDLER**  
STATE INSURANCE COMMISSIONER

STATE OF WASHINGTON



**OFFICE OF  
INSURANCE COMMISSIONER**

OLYMPIA OFFICE:  
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P.O. BOX 40258  
OLYMPIA, WA 98504-0258  
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Dear SHIBA Volunteer:

I believe we all have the opportunity to make a difference in the communities where we live. Volunteers with the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors know this well. Our volunteers help others gain access to the health care coverage they need and deserve. They see firsthand the ways they make a difference in the lives of others, and how much they are key to SHIBA's success in communities around the state.

I am very happy you have decided to volunteer with SHIBA. Our staff will train you to provide information about health care coverage, insurance, public health programs, fighting fraud, and more. I believe your experience as a volunteer for SHIBA will be exciting and rewarding. Working together, we all can make a difference.

Thank you for this important commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Kreidler".

Mike Kreidler  
Insurance Commissioner

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# OFFICE OF THE INSURANCE COMMISSIONER

## Overview

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) is a fairly small agency in Washington state government. 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 200 people. These employees 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 over 400 SHIBA volunteers, 20 sponsoring organizations, and their staff are also part of the OIC family.

## 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.** During 2015, the OIC investigated and resolved more than 6,000 complaints, recovering more than \$9.5 million 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, responds to thousands of questions from consumers every year.

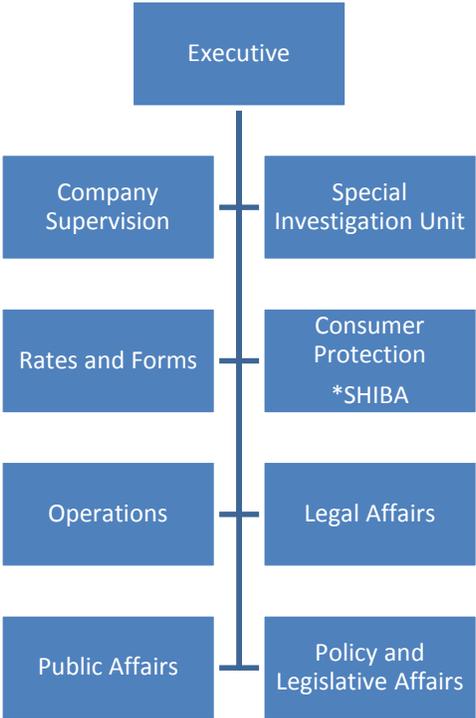
The Insurance Consumer Hotline is a toll-free line consumers can call for help with all issues related to insurance. Calls are triaged and sent to either our compliance analysts or SHIBA. Our compliance analysts help with insurance issues, plans and companies that the OIC regulates. When insurance issues are outside OIC's control (such as issues regulated by federal law), staff refer consumers to appropriate resources. In 2015, the Insurance Consumer Hotline received calls from more than 83,000 consumers.

SHIBA assists consumers with all kinds of health insurance, prescription drug plans, and public programs, regardless of jurisdictional authority.

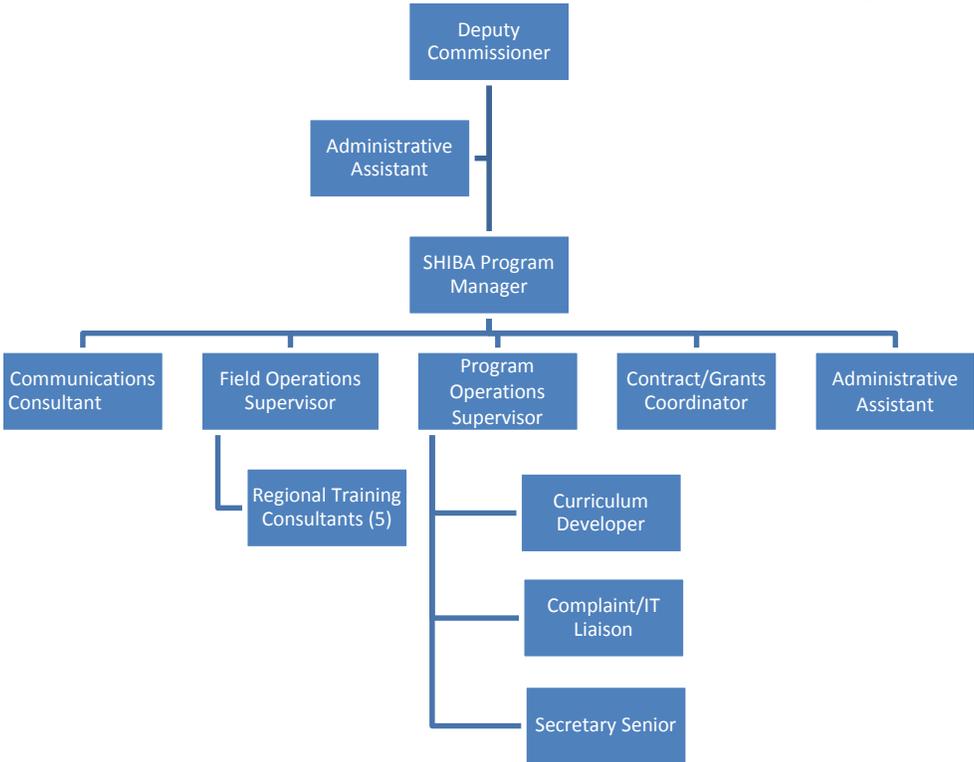
We're proud of the work we do at the OIC and we're glad you're part of our team.

# Office of the Insurance Commissioner

## Organization chart



## Consumer Protection Division (SHIBA)



# ABOUT SHIBA

SHIBA is part of the Consumer Protection Division within the OIC.

## **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**

- A free health care access and information resource
- An information and counseling service to help consumers evaluate, plan for their needs, and use health insurance and public health programs

*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 State Health Insurance Programs (SHIPs) in all states
- Twenty local sponsoring agencies represent all 39 Washington counties

# SHIBA services

<i>Features and Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FREE!</li> <li>• Impartial and objective (no affiliation with any insurance company or product)</li> <li>• Confidential</li> <li>• Accessible offices in nearly every county</li> </ul>
<i>Ways we can help</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess health care coverage needs</li> <li>• Screen for possible eligibility for programs</li> <li>• Evaluate and compare policies and programs</li> <li>• Identify and report possible fraud</li> <li>• Provide referrals to other agencies and programs</li> </ul>
<i>Methods and Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one counseling</li> <li>• Public presentations and workshops</li> <li>• Health fairs and special events</li> <li>• Publications and online resources</li> <li>• Referrals</li> <li>• Community partnership development</li> <li>• Recruiting and training volunteers</li> <li>• Continuing education</li> </ul>
<i>Who SHIBA Serves</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of all ages, all walks of life</li> <li>• People with disabilities</li> <li>• Seniors and pre-retirees</li> <li>• Ethnic populations</li> <li>• LEP (Limited English Proficiency) communities</li> <li>• Disease-specific groups</li> <li>• Uninsured people</li> <li>• Rural populations</li> <li>• People of all economic backgrounds</li> </ul>

# VOLUNTEER APPLICATION, TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

## **Screening and selection process**

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.

**If you want to become a volunteer, you 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 of former or current supervisors of employment, volunteer activities or other credible sources.
- Take the Basic Training as soon as your background check is complete.
- Complete the Path to Certification.

**NOTE:** At any time during this process, the potential volunteer, sponsor, and/or OIC staff have the right to decide whether SHIBA is the right fit for the volunteer applicant.

## Path to SHIBA certification

Becoming a certified SHIBA volunteer involves a multi-step process that you must complete before you can actually work with clients. SHIBA staff and other volunteers provide unlimited support and assistance to new volunteers every step of the certification process. The chart below depicts the various steps a new volunteer must successfully complete to become a certified SHIBA volunteer. It starts after you decide to become a certified SHIBA volunteer.

#	Steps:	Actions:	Timing:
1	<b>Application</b>	New volunteer completes application and passes background check	Background checks completed within 2 weeks
2	<b>Initial interview</b>	Volunteer Coordinator (VC) schedules interview with new volunteer and presents Volunteer Handbook	Scheduled by VC
3	<b>Basic Training</b>	New volunteer completes SHIBA Basic Training Class (online or in-person)	Varies
4	<b>Requests exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New volunteer requests to take exam from VC</li> <li>• SHIBA Admin checks all paperwork and background checks before notifying the SHIBA Curriculum Developer (CD)</li> <li>• CD sends link to new volunteer to take the exam</li> </ul>	Varies (3 weeks to complete exam)
5	<b>Takes exam</b>	New volunteer submits completed exam to Curriculum Developer who reports results to all parties	3 weeks after Basic Training
6	<b>Mentoring Training</b>	New volunteer coordinates with trainer on dates available for the in-person training <sup>1</sup>	Any time after Basic Training
7	<b>Badge photo</b>	VC requests or takes picture of new volunteer and sends to SHIBA Secretary Senior	At anytime
8	<b>Shadowing</b>	Volunteer meets with VC who assigns a mentor	Minimum 10 hours
9	<b>Role Assignment Discussion</b>	During interview, VC works with volunteer to complete the Mentoring Checklist and discuss potential roles	Scheduled by VC
10	<b>Certificate requested</b>	VC sends in Mentoring Checklist to CD for volunteer file and notifies CD that volunteer has completed mentoring	After second interview
11	<b>Certificate issued</b>	CD prepares volunteer certificate and SHIBA Secretary Senior mails certificate and badge to Regional Training Consultants to present to new volunteer	Upon completing mentoring phase
12	<b>Certified volunteer begins working with clients</b>		
13	<b>Certified volunteer attends all Monthly Volunteer Trainings</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Mentoring training will be available sometime in 2016. Please skip step until further notice and continue mentoring as noted in step #8.

## 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 adhere to 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
- Legible handwriting or typing skills

## Volunteer roles

We have various roles our volunteers can donate their time in:

- Administrative, clerical and technical support
- Community education/public speaking
- Outreach
- Counseling
- Training and mentoring
- Data entry
- Fraud specialist
- Special projects

**“Most rewarding  
work I’ve ever  
done.”**

*Dick Anderson  
2015*

## **SHIBA volunteer responsibilities**

As a SHIBA volunteer, we ask you to:

- ✓ Accept assignments suited to your interests, talents and skills.
- ✓ Participate in appropriate orientation, training and evaluation.
- ✓ Learn about SHIBA policies, people and programs.
- ✓ Represent and promote SHIBA.
- ✓ Be a member of the team who is trusted, who listens to consumers and other volunteers, and who shares ideas with SHIBA staff.
- ✓ Act in a professional manner that includes respecting confidences and communicating clearly.
- ✓ Be accountable to SHIBA when involved in SHIBA work.
- ✓ Work within the policies of the organization and carry out the assignments expected to the best of your ability.

## **Training**

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

- ✓ Strive to become and remain proficient in the performance of their SHIBA role.
- ✓ Examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to SHIBA.
- ✓ 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 update and other training sessions as requested.

## **Volunteer Training and Development**

There are four components of SHIBA volunteer training:

1. Basic Training
2. Certification Exam
3. Volunteer Mentoring Training
4. Monthly Trainings

*Note:* For details on SHIBA's available training modules, go to the My SHIBA web page (<http://www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only>) and find the section on "SHIBA Training" to get details about Basic Training and Monthly Volunteer Training.

### **Basic Training**

New volunteers may begin the Basic Training Course as soon as they have completed their required paperwork and may do so at their own pace if using the online training slides. This training course is available on My SHIBA and the information is updated as needed to reflect new information and changes. Please see *Path to Certification* on My SHIBA for reference.

Basic Training Classes consist of the following topics:

- Welcome to SHIBA
- Health Insurance 101
- Medicare Part A
- Medicare Part B
- Medicare Part D
- Medigaps
- Medicare Part C

### **Certification Exam**

All new volunteers, who join SHIBA after January 2014 are required to take and pass a certification exam before they can work with consumers.

### **Volunteer Mentoring Training**

After completing the Basic Training, a mentoring training will take place to provide skills and techniques to volunteers for becoming a counselor.

In addition, we also provide SHIBA web tools (located on My SHIBA):

- Medicare.gov and Medicare Plan Finder
- SHIBA Online
- Department of Printing (PRT)
- SHIP TA Center
- CMS National Training Program
- Senior Medicare Patrol

## Monthly Trainings

Once a volunteer completes Basic Training, he or she is expected to attend monthly training classes at their sponsor's site. These training sessions consist of three hours of monthly classroom instruction and discussion. Volunteer coordinators also have time on the agenda to share local information.

- Attendance at eight of the 10 Monthly Training Classes is required for certificated volunteers to remain active.
- No Monthly Volunteer Training is scheduled in August or December to accommodate volunteers' vacation schedules.
- Training materials will be posted on the password-protected My SHIBA website.
- If you are unable to attend a training, please review the training materials and consult with your Volunteer Coordinator or your Regional Training Consultant to clarify any questions and to make sure you are given credit for the class.
- The trainings will be broken down in to three components called "Monthly Training Packets". The packets will include:
  - **Core training** – focus on any changes and new information related to Medicare
  - **Monthly training** – broaden the sponsors' and volunteers' focus in their primary areas of business as a SHIBA sponsor.
  - **National training** – incorporate national information in our packets when necessary. Any Washington state specific information will be priority.

# THE SHIBA SCOPE

## **What our volunteers can choose to do**

- Screen clients' eligibility for various health care coverage options including Medicare, Medigap, private health insurance, low-income programs and COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act).
- Provide clients and community members with unbiased information about their options.
- Advise clients about points to think about with regard to their options.
- Educate the community about fraud identification and prevention.
- Counsel and/or enroll clients in programs and plans when eligible and appropriate.

## **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 Administration
- TRICARE
- Health Benefit Exchange
- Social Security Administration
- Medicare
- Washington State Health Insurance Pool
- Medicaid (Apple Health)

You can also be a great help to your clients by letting them know about the OIC's statewide toll-free Insurance Consumer Hotline at 1-800-562-6900. Through this 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.

It's important for SHIBA to provide the same service across the state to ALL clients who come to us for help and to all work within our program's scope of service.

# 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 are held to the same standards as other OIC employees - we all represent the OIC, whether as 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.

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

## Representing SHIBA

As a volunteer, you're a representative of the OIC when you perform your SHIBA duties. We ask you to conduct yourself in a professional manner, 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.

**"I volunteered for SHIBA when I first signed up for Medicare. I was completely baffled, even though I like to think I'm pretty smart, I am highly educated and I spent most of my career reading really technical government documents (not insurance, but still . . .). How would someone who didn't have these advantages even begin to figure it out? I've realized that while I don't miss my job at all, I really did miss the kind of learning I got to do. And, oh boy, does SHIBA ever give you the opportunity to do that! Not every call, but many of them, bring up issues you've never encountered. Your trainer and fellow volunteers are there to help you work through them."**

*Jenny Elliott*

## Public appearance

We ask all volunteers to use their best judgment in maintaining an appropriate appearance when meeting with the public. Please wear your SHIBA name tag when you volunteer, so others can easily identify you. Your volunteer coordinator can help you obtain a SHIBA picture ID badge.

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

## Conflict of interest

The following guidelines will help you understand and prevent any implied or unintentional endorsement of private-sector entities.

SHIBA public communications should only include information and images that SHIBA has formally approved. Contact the SHIBA Communications Coordinator at the main office in Tumwater regarding the needs of your program.

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.

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

As a SHIBA volunteer, here are some things you need to know regarding conflict of interest:

1. Avoid situations that invite a conflict or the appearance of a conflict with your volunteer work.
2. Avoid situations that undermine the confidence of OIC-regulated industries.
3. You cannot have any interest (financial or otherwise), directly or indirectly, in an insurance company, other than as a policyholder.
4. You cannot engage in a business transaction or professional activity that conflicts with the business of SHIBA or the OIC.

5. You cannot have an active insurance license to sell insurance.
6. You must disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
7. 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.
8. You may not participate in any political or lobbying activities while representing SHIBA.
9. You must refrain from partnering with or referring to specific 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.

## **Confidentiality**

SHIBA volunteers protect private information obtained during volunteering. You cannot disclose to unauthorized people any confidential information you obtain through official duties. You also cannot 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 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 should make a prompt 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 should 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.

## **Reporting**

We require volunteers to complete all SHIBA reporting in an accurate, truthful and timely fashion. We're held accountable for the work we do and the grant funds we receive. Your data helps us demonstrate your valuable

contributions. You should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation is accurate and reflects the services you provided.

## **Volunteer time sheets**

All volunteers are required to report their time spent on SHIBA activities other than counseling activities each month. Using the volunteer time sheet, you should track the time you spend counseling clients in SHIBA Online. You should track other volunteer activities, such as attending meetings, outreach events and travel.

We use all of the data SHIBA collects to report our activities to SHIBA funding sources and to track and acknowledge the efforts and time of our volunteers statewide.

## **Using SHIBA resources**

You may use SHIBA resources (including our name and your status as a volunteer) only for official purposes. You may **not** 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

If you suspect or know about any improper use of SHIBA resources, report it right away to a SHIBA volunteer coordinator or a regional training consultant.

## **Electronic communications**

Electronic communication systems, including telephones, email, voicemail, faxes and the Internet, are available for you to conduct SHIBA business in a timely and efficient manner. All communications should be professional and appropriate. You may not use electronic communications to solicit funds, political messages, harassing messages or personal use. All electronic data are the property of the State of Washington and may be considered public records. Anyone can request copies of email communication through Washington state's public disclosure law.

## 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.

**“With the health care crisis being so important, if I can help just one person at a time I feel I really can make a difference.”**

*Rochelle S.  
Everett*

## Impartiality

Our volunteers may not engage in political activities during volunteer hours. This includes the display of political signs or materials on desks, in work spaces or at counseling sites.

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.

As a SHIBA volunteer, you may not 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 is part of your official SHIBA duties.

## Non-discrimination and anti-harassment

The OIC will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or intimidation of any kind. Through enforcement of this policy and educating volunteers, the OIC will seek to prevent, correct and discipline behavior that violates this policy.

All volunteers are expected to comply with this policy and to take appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur. The OIC will take appropriate disciplinary action against any volunteer who violates this policy.

## Definitions

1. **Discrimination** – The act of favoritism or making a difference in the treatment of someone based on his or her 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.
2. **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.
3. **Harassment** – Verbal or physical conduct that degrades or shows hostility or aversion toward someone due to his or her 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;
  - the purpose is to unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance; or
  - otherwise adversely affects 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.

4. **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 another person;
  - interference with the work performance of another employee, sponsor, or volunteer; or
  - other improper behavior that has an adverse impact on the mental or physical well-being of an employee, sponsor and volunteer.

5. **Sexual harassment** – This involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- 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; or
- the purpose of this conduct is to interfere with an individual's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

6. **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 the person's:
  - Race
  - Creed
  - Color
  - Religion
  - Gender
  - National origin
  - Age
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender identity/expression
  - Familial status
  - Marital 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, that is personally offensive, and that 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 (nicknames);
  - slurs or negative stereotyping;
  - threatening;
  - intimidating or hostile acts; or
  - degrading jokes and display, or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates (to put down or belittle) or shows hostility toward an individual or group.
- No one may impose a hardship, loss, or benefit, and penalty on a volunteer as punishment for:
  - filing or responding to bona fide complaint of discrimination or harassment;
  - appearing as a witness in the investigation of a complaint; or
  - 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**

- You're expected to report all perceived incidents of discrimination, intimidation or harassment in the workplace to your 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.
- Supervisors or managers 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 his or her behavior is unwelcome and request they discontinue it.
- Registering a complaint will not be used against a volunteer, and it will not have an adverse impact on the individual's 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, he or she will be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action.

## **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 his or her 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 a person sues you for damages in your role as a SHIBA volunteer, you can request the Washington State Attorney General to serve as your defense. If the Attorney General finds your actions were taken in good faith and were within the scope of your duties, he or she 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 supervisor for help.

## Evaluations or feedback from sponsors and trainers

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

## SHIBA grievance procedures

It's important you quickly, reasonably and safely resolve any conflicts that arise. 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 he or she 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 assist in resolving the matter, and you should contact him or her if the steps above don't lead to satisfactory resolution.

## Resignation

We know our volunteers are not with us forever. To help us maintain continuity, when resigning, if possible, please submit a two-week notice by email or printed letter to your volunteer coordinator and send a copy to SHIBA by U.S. mail or email. In your notice, please say if you would like an exit interview by phone, and we will schedule one for you.

## Reasons for dismissal

We don't often ask volunteers to leave; however, it does happen on rare occasions. Proven instances of the following behaviors will lead to immediate dismissal:

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

# WORKPLACE SAFETY

## **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).

You're responsible for performing all tasks 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 should occur whether you're a direct participant, a witness or involved in any way with an incident.

## **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 that 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.

Finally, anyone may contact law enforcement if he or she has reasonable cause to believe a crime has been committed.

# SHIBA CLIENT SERVICE GUIDELINES

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

- Give clients information so they can make their own decisions about their needs don't rely on your preferences.
- Use clear and basic language with clients. Give clients a chance to ask questions.
- Ask as many questions as needed to fully understand the clients' 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.
- Please maintain appropriate interpersonal boundaries. At no time engage in flirting, sexual activities or sexual contact with clients.
- When clients are not literate or have 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. When possible, give written materials in clients' native languages.
- When a client displays cognitive impairment, or seems to have trouble understanding, make sure a family member or guardian helps the client with the decision-making process.
- When in doubt about a client's mental state, you should inform your volunteer coordinator immediately. The volunteer coordinator should address the issue with the client, the client's next-of-kin or legal guardian, if there is one.
  - Obtain permission from the client before talking to the client's next-of-kin or legal guardian.
- It will always be a delicate situation when you aren't sure that the client understands what he or she is doing. SHIBA volunteers may ask about the client's desire for access to help or a caregiver and 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.

## **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.** At no time should you ever go into the home of a client or have a client in your home, even if you are 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 recommend you provide the service over the phone or in a public location to ensure the safety and well-being of all.

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 will base their decision upon resources available 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.

# MY SHIBA

## **Volunteer and sponsors web page**

The volunteer and sponsor section of the web is called My SHIBA. These pages are password-protected. If you're unable to access the Internet, please check with your volunteer coordinator. To log in, go to [www.insurance.wa.gov](http://www.insurance.wa.gov) and click on SHIBA volunteers at the bottom of the home page. The password is: document

My SHIBA always has the most current information on the following topics:

- SHIBA Online
- Outreach tools
- Publications
- How to order publications from Department of Printing
- Training information
- Contact information
- Traveling information
- Medicare Unique IDs
- News Flashes

# PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS

## **SHIBA-approved materials**

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

## **Publication standards**

The OIC Public Affairs Department has responsibility for the overall OIC publication standards. The goal of Public Affairs is to increase the visibility and recognition of the OIC.

Our SHIBA communications coordinator writes and edits all SHIBA publications. The communications coordinator consults with a team of OIC Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for accurate technical content in publications as well as designs publications following OIC standards. As a volunteer, we hope you provide input to your regional training consultant on existing publications or talk to them to propose new materials.

*Note: Refer to the SHIBA Public Information Template and Style Guide for easy-to-use templates and guidelines.*

## **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. We also consult with our expert Volunteer Technical Advisory Committee (VTAC) to aid in the development process. SHIBA staff also pilot new training modules in front of SHIBA volunteer groups to ensure they are understandable, valuable and enjoyable.

# REPORTING – SHIBA ONLINE

SHIBA Online is the database 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 and enhance overall SHIBA performance
- Our community experiences to lawmakers and others in charge of policy decisions (both state and federal)

## How SHIBA Online 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

**“I am volunteering today because I enjoy the feeling that I have helped people through their health program crises, or helping them to get health insurance when they have none. It makes me feel warm when people tell me that I really helped them.”**

*Duane P.  
Kent*

NOTES:

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# USING STATE RESOURCES

## CenturyLink phone calling card

Through CenturyLink, we provide SHIBA sponsors with calling cards and PIN numbers that lets volunteers call long distance for SHIBA business only. The calling card is a state resource - please keep the card and numbers private, and remember to use appropriately!

### Using the calling card

- **SHIBA volunteers who have CenturyLink phone service** - If you return SHIBA calls using your CenturyLink service, you may use \*67 to block your phone number from showing on the **receiving** end.
- **For SHIBA volunteers who have Comcast phone service** - \*67 may or may not work to block your phone number from showing on the receiving end – be sure to check with Comcast.
- Some issues using \*67 you should know about:
  1. If you're using a non-CenturyLink phone service, \*67 will not work. (The exception: some Comcast customers can use \*67.)
  2. If you're dialing a number that has activated a feature to stop all blocked calls, your call will not go through.
  3. If you're calling from a state agency phone, \*67 will not work.
  4. If you don't have CenturyLink or Comcast phone service, ask your local phone company for blocking information.

## OIC travel reimbursement

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

- Your travel must be pre-approved by the SHIBA program manager.
- 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: <http://www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only/travel-reimbursement/>.

# SERVICE TO LIMITED-ENGLISH SPEAKING CLIENTS

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

- Use a bilingual volunteer either from your team or another SHIBA team, if they are willing and available.
- Use the Language Link resources to interpret. The Language Link can also be used to set appointments. For more information:  
[www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only/language-line-services/](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only/language-line-services/)
- Get the help of other groups that have language resources or native speakers.
- Ask a family member or friend of the client to help.

Here are some additional resources to help limited English-speaking clients:

## **National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)**

- Chinese (Cantonese & Mandarin): 1-800-582-4218
- Korean: 1-800-582-4259
- Vietnamese: 1-800-582-4336
- English: 1-800-336-2722

Available hours are Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Pacific Time). If the lines are busy, the caller will get a voicemail. We recommend you leave their name and call-back number.

## **The National Alliance for Hispanic Health**

1-866-783-2645

(English and Spanish)

Individuals can receive one-on-one counseling, help applying for low-income subsidy, and help finding a plan to meet their individual needs. The hotline is available Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Pacific Time).

**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.

1-800-MEDICARE Customer Service Reps (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.

# CELEBRATING OUR 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.
- Emotional or stressful interactions should be processed with your volunteer coordinator. Don't bottle your feelings up!
- Know how important your work is in promoting 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 saying "thank you" and, "we hope you will continue to serve with us." Recognition is expressed locally on special occasions and in day-to-day activities. Our sponsors usually have a yearly recognition event that they'll ask you to attend.

SHIBA recognizes its volunteers yearly during April – usually during your scheduled Volunteer Monthly Training meeting.

# NEWS FLASH

## **What is *News Flash*?**

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

## **How can I sign up to get *News Flash*?**

You can join or leave the *News Flash* distribution list at any time. There are several ways to join. Pick the way that works best for you!



## **Sign yourself up:**

1. Go to our website at [www.insurance.wa.gov/shiba](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/shiba). Click on the link for SHIBA *News Flash*, and follow the instructions to sign up.
2. You will get a confirmation email.
3. When you receive that email, follow the instructions in it to start receiving *News Flash*.

## **Put your name and email address on the sign-up sheet:**

- SHIBA staff will add your name to the list.
- When you receive the confirmation email, follow the instructions to start receiving *News Flash*.

## **I don't use email. How can I get copies of *News Flash*?**

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

# GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

I have learned the following:

- Procedures for checking in and out of my local sponsor site
- How to get a SHIBA badge
- Which folks at the sponsor office you'll see and work with the most (if available, get a contact list)
- How to receive SHIBA/sponsor information (newsletters, training and referral information)
- Location of training materials, publications and supplies

## OTHER THINGS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

- After you complete your Basic Training, you'll need to get trained on the following topics:
  - New volunteer orientation
  - Counseling
  - SHIBA Online Data Entry
- Start to attend Volunteer Monthly Training as soon as possible.
- Coordinate with Volunteer Coordinator to mentor with a seasoned volunteer
- Help out in the local SHIBA office.
- Browse all the SHIBA web pages on the public website at: [www.insurance.wa.gov/SHIBA](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/SHIBA) and the My SHIBA web pages for volunteers, the Medicare web pages at [www.insurance.wa.gov/your-insurance/medicare](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/your-insurance/medicare) and sponsors only at: [www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only/index.html](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only/index.html).
- Register to become a SHIBA Online user on the My SHIBA web page at: [www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only/index.html](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/volunteers-only/index.html).
- Review all SHIBA publications and tools.
- Remember to record all client and outreach activities in SHIBA Online.
- Socialize with other volunteers and SHIBA staff, and have fun!



SHIBA is a free, unbiased service of the:



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