



Wisconsin State Health Insurance  
Assistance Program (SHIP)  
Volunteer Risk and Program  
Management Policy Standards



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT**  
*of* **HEALTH SERVICES**

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# Wisconsin State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Volunteer Risk and Program Management Policy Standards

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## Table of Contents

1.0	Introductory Policy Standards.....	1
1.1	Overall Policy on Engagement of Volunteers.....	1
1.2	Scope of the Volunteer Policy Standards .....	1
1.3	Compliance .....	1
1.4	Volunteer Role Classifications .....	1
2.0	Risk Management and Health and Safety Policy Standards .....	2
2.1	Risk Assessment .....	2
2.2	Automobile Insurance Coverage .....	2
2.3	Safety Training.....	2
2.4	Reporting of Abuse.....	2
2.5	Privacy and Location of Counseling.....	2
2.6	Home Visits.....	3
2.7	Incident Reporting.....	3
2.8	Incident Response .....	3
2.9	Emergency Contact Procedures .....	3
3.0	Volunteer Recruitment .....	3
3.1	Fair and Equitable Application .....	3
3.2	Community Representativeness.....	3
3.3	Volunteer Role Development.....	3
3.4	Role Descriptions.....	4
3.5	Standards of Performance.....	4
3.6	Recruitment.....	4
3.7	Nondiscrimination .....	4
3.8	Advertisement of Volunteer Opportunities .....	4
3.9	Communication with Prospective Volunteers.....	4
3.10	Wait List.....	5

3.11	Selection Policy.....	5
3.12	Screening Authority.....	5
3.13	Equity and Human Rights Compliance .....	5
3.14	Right of Refusal.....	5
3.15	Full Disclosure of Process and Volunteer Consent .....	5
3.16	Application Form .....	6
3.17	Interviews .....	6
3.18	Conflict of Interest.....	6
3.19	Background Checks.....	6
3.20	Criminal Records Check .....	6
3.21	Confidentiality of Screening Information .....	6
3.22	Revisions to the Screening Process .....	6
3.23	Placement.....	7
3.24	Acceptance and Appointment.....	7
4.0	Volunteer Program Management Policy Standards .....	7
4.1	Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities.....	7
4.2	Volunteer Program Management System.....	7
4.3	Volunteer Coordinator .....	7
4.4	Resources for Volunteer Support and Involvement.....	7
4.5	Maintenance of Records .....	7
4.6	Volunteer Access to Personnel Record .....	8
4.7	Beneficiaries and Relatives as Volunteers.....	8
4.8	Service at the Discretion of the SHIP.....	8
4.9	Evaluation of Volunteer Involvement and Program Management System .....	8
4.10	Volunteer-Staff Interface.....	8
4.11	Refusal of Assignments.....	8
4.12	Paid Staff Requests for Volunteers.....	8
4.13	Worksite .....	9
4.14	Leaves of Absence .....	9
4.15	Probationary Period .....	9
4.16	Documenting Screening .....	9
4.17	Incomplete or False Information .....	9

4.18	New Screening Standards for Current Volunteers .....	9
4.19	Reconfirmation of Screening.....	9
4.20	Up-Screening .....	9
4.21	Screening of Previous Volunteers .....	10
4.22	Reassignment .....	10
4.23	Orientation .....	10
4.24	Training.....	10
4.25	Demonstrating Qualifications.....	10
4.26	On-the-Job Training.....	11
4.27	Continuing Education .....	11
4.28	Components .....	11
4.29	Local Supervisor’s Role .....	11
4.30	Notice of Performance Management System .....	11
4.31	Right of Supervision and Support.....	11
4.32	The Nature of Supervision and Support .....	11
4.33	Acceptance of Supervision .....	12
4.34	Requirement of a Local supervisor.....	12
4.35	Lines of Communication .....	12
4.36	Evaluation of Performance.....	12
4.37	Documenting Performance .....	12
4.38	Communication with the Volunteer Management Unit .....	12
4.39	Progressive Corrective Action .....	12
4.40	Performance Management Review and Appeals Procedures.....	12
4.41	Grievance/Complaint Procedure.....	12
4.42	Investigation of Outside Complaints .....	13
4.43	Resignation .....	13
4.44	Clarification of Meaning .....	13
4.45	Volunteer Conduct .....	13
4.46	Boundaries and Ethics .....	13
4.47	Provision of Services.....	13
4.48	Representation of the SHIP .....	14
4.49	Use of SHIP Affiliation.....	14

4.50	Confidentiality .....	14
4.51	Recording of Volunteer Time and Activity .....	14
4.52	Absenteeism .....	14
4.53	Harassment.....	14
4.54	Drugs and Alcohol.....	15
4.55	Acceptance of Gifts.....	15
4.56	Acceptance of Honoraria .....	15
4.57	Access to SHIP Property and Materials .....	15
4.58	Relationships with Beneficiaries.....	15
4.59	Financial Transactions with Clients .....	16
4.60	Political Issues.....	16
4.61	Cultural Sensitivity.....	16
4.62	Labor Actions .....	16
4.63	Recognition.....	16
4.64	Informal Recognition .....	16
4.65	Feedback on Results .....	16
4.66	Volunteer Relationships with Paid Staff .....	17
4.67	Responsibilities of Local Supervisors of Volunteers .....	17
4.68	Volunteer Management Training for Members of Staff .....	17
5.0	Volunteer Departure .....	17
5.1	Dismissal of a Volunteer .....	17
5.2	Immediate Dismissal.....	17
5.3	Notice of Departure of a Volunteer.....	18
5.4	Reassignment of Work and Cessation of Work Relationships .....	18
6.0	Information Technology Policy Standards .....	18
6.1	Information Procedures .....	18
6.2	Internet Protocol .....	18
6.3	Reporting Stolen or Lost Consumer Information .....	18
6.4	SHIP Reporting Software Use .....	18
6.5	Use of Social Media by Volunteers.....	19

# Wisconsin State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

## Volunteer Risk and Program Management Policy Standards

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### 1.0 Introductory Policy Standards

#### 1.1 Overall Policy on Engagement of Volunteers

The SHIP accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at a range of levels and within all appropriate projects and activities. Involvement of volunteers is a key component of the SHIP.

#### 1.2 Scope of the Volunteer Policy Standards

Unless specifically stated, these volunteer policy standards apply to all agencies (henceforth referred to as SHIP Sub-Grantees) that receive SHIP funding through a sub-grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and employ volunteers to perform SHIP work. The pivotal variable in the application of these volunteer policy standards is volunteers' performance of SHIP work. Where volunteers are clearly performing what could reasonably be called "SHIP work," SHIP Sub-Grantees should develop, maintain, and enforce volunteer risk and program management policies that meet the standards outlined in this document.

#### 1.3 Compliance

Volunteers are made aware of all volunteer policies. SHIP volunteers are expected to conduct their work with a view to the larger picture of what is in the best interests of the majority of SHIP beneficiaries, the integrity of SHIP programming, and the long-term reputation and sustainability of the SHIP itself. Compliance with all SHIP volunteer policies is a minimal expectation of SHIP volunteers. When a SHIP volunteer fails to comply with a policy, the SHIP Sub-Grantee will make a reasonable effort, wherever possible, to assist the volunteer to come into compliance. Should reasonable efforts prove unsuccessful, further disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including dismissal.

#### 1.4 Volunteer Role Classifications

These policies apply to all roles undertaken by SHIP volunteers, whether through direct service with a SHIP or involvement in SHIP activities via a host organization. Titles for volunteer positions in the SHIP program are not nationally standardized. Volunteers may be qualified to serve in one or more role(s).

Wisconsin will consider volunteers who directly counsel clients and/or who provide community outreach presentations to be Basic Level SHIP Counselors.

Wisconsin will consider certified Advanced Level SHIP Counselors able to provide assistance with Medicaid programs, appeals, and complex Medicare topics.

## **2.0 Risk Management and Health and Safety Policy Standards**

### **2.1 Risk Assessment**

Every three years the volunteer coordinator for the SHIP Sub-Grantee, in conjunction with the state SHIP director, conducts a risk assessment on the roles, work, and activities of SHIP volunteers. Also assessed regularly in connection with risk are training and qualification procedures, volunteer performance management, volunteer program management processes and activities, and volunteer worksite(s). Risk management strategies are implemented as needed, including, in particular, local-level procedures that identify, prevent, and reduce the incidence and impact of risk.

### **2.2 Automobile Insurance Coverage**

Volunteers using their own vehicles for SHIP-related activities are advised to notify their own automobile insurance providers about those activities and ensure coverage is in place and provides adequate protection. SHIP volunteers who drive their own vehicles for SHIP work purposes are required to carry liability coverage on any vehicle so used. The volunteer bears the cost of this insurance. Automobile insurance coverage is verified at least annually by the volunteer's local supervisor, signed off by the volunteer, and the signed certification is retained in the volunteer's personnel file. Volunteers immediately notify their local supervisors if their automobile insurance coverage lapses.

### **2.3 Safety Training**

Volunteers are informed of foreseeable hazardous aspects, materials, equipment, or processes they may encounter while performing volunteer work, and are trained and equipped in methods to deal with all identified risks. Training for volunteers includes discussion of safe work practices and methods for responding to potentially hazardous situations. Volunteers exercise caution in all work activities. Volunteers who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report such situations are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### **2.4 Reporting of Abuse**

SHIP volunteers who witness instances of physical, psychological, financial, or verbal abuse of consumers while performing their assigned duties report this to their local supervisors so that appropriate follow-up action may occur.

### **2.5 Privacy and Location of Counseling**

Face-to-face work with individual beneficiaries primarily takes place at SHIP offices (or those of partner agencies). Where beneficiaries are unable to travel to the SHIP (or partner's) office, volunteers discuss with their local supervisors alternative meeting arrangements that will maintain beneficiary privacy. Off-site counseling work is not undertaken by volunteers without prior approval by the volunteer's supervisor, in consultation with the SHIP director. Where one-to-one information is requested by an audience member at a public presentation, SHIP volunteers provide only general information and do not gather personal, financial, or other



confidential information from the beneficiary. Inquiries that involve the collection of such personal, financial, or other confidential information are referred for a more formal counseling session in an appropriately private location.

### **2.6 Home Visits**

When home visits by SHIP volunteers to a beneficiary's residence are determined to be necessary, the grantee is required to have protocols in place to ensure the safety of the volunteers and the beneficiaries involved.

### **2.7 Incident Reporting**

Any accident or injury to or by a volunteer is reported immediately to the local supervisor or other SHIP authority. The SHIP Sub-Grantee has an incident reporting form and protocol. Volunteers complete required accident and injury reports promptly following any incident.

### **2.8 Incident Response**

In response to a reported incident involving SHIP volunteers, the volunteer coordinator ensures and oversees the notification of relevant authorities (for example, SHIP Sub-Grantee agency management, police, public health, insurance, Administration for Community Living) as appropriate and undertakes subsequent steps necessary to respond to and resolve the incident.

### **2.9 Emergency Contact Procedures**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has emergency contact information on all of its volunteers and a procedure that enables volunteers to communicate with supervisory personnel at any time volunteers are on duty. Response to emergency communications takes place without delay.

## **3.0 Volunteer Recruitment**

### **3.1 Fair and Equitable Application**

SHIP policies guiding volunteer program management apply equally to all SHIP volunteers, and compliance with these policies is a condition of continued volunteer involvement in SHIP.

### **3.2 Community Representativeness**

SHIP strives to develop a volunteer population that mirrors the diversity of the community in which it operates.

### **3.3 Volunteer Role Development**

Volunteers may fill a wide range of standard roles at SHIP. All roles must conform to the primary goals of the SHIP program. SHIP staff members are encouraged to identify possible new roles for SHIP volunteers. Volunteers may be invited to serve at a range of levels of skill and decision-making. While all volunteers are encouraged to complete the basic SHIP training and take the Basic Level SHIP Certification Exam, certification is required for volunteers to provide one-on-one counseling or presentations.

Should a volunteer seek to become certified to provide advanced counseling, their supervisor should consult with the Wisconsin SHIP director.

### **3.4 Role Descriptions**

Prior to any recruitment effort or volunteer assignment, a role description is developed by the SHIP Sub-Grantee for each volunteer position in consultation with the state SHIP director. All role descriptions include, but may not be limited to the following:

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

Templates for role descriptions are available on the [SHIP Technical Assistance \(TA\) Center website](#) and on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

### **3.5 Standards of Performance**

Standards of performance are established by the SHIP Sub-Grantee for each volunteer role. A copy of the relevant standards of performance is provided by the SHIP Sub-Grantee to all volunteers at the beginning of their assignment. A template Volunteer Agreement that includes standards of performance is available on the [SHIP Technical Assistance \(TA\) Center website](#) and on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

### **3.6 Recruitment**

Volunteers are recruited by the SHIP Sub-Grantee on a proactive basis, with the intent of broadening SHIP services to beneficiaries. Acceptance as a volunteer is not automatic. Volunteers fulfill all screening, orientation, and training requirements for the role in which they are interested before being accepted into service.

### **3.7 Nondiscrimination**

Volunteer roles are open to community members aged 18 or older regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ancestry, mental or physical disability, medical condition, disability, 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 SHIP.

### **3.8 Advertisement of Volunteer Opportunities**

Opportunities to volunteer are publicized broadly and through a variety of methods to ensure that no group of people is excluded because of limited distribution of information.

### **3.9 Communication with Prospective Volunteers**

People who express an initial interest in volunteering with SHIP receive a prompt response. A response protocol exists to prevent undue delay and ensure that prospective volunteers receive a welcoming and effective recruitment message.

### **3.10 Wait List**

If volunteer opportunities are not immediately available or initial volunteer training is not available quickly, the SHIP Sub-Grantee may maintain a wait list of interested prospective volunteers or help volunteers find other suitable volunteer work.

### **3.11 Selection Policy**

The decision to accept (or not) each volunteer applicant is based on careful consideration of all pertinent information gathered in the screening process. The SHIP Sub-Grantee strives to maintain a safe and productive workplace with honest, trustworthy, reliable, and qualified volunteers who do not present a risk of harm to themselves, other people, or the reputation of SHIP. Screening processes are clear and comprehensive and standards are never waived, even for people known to the screener. Screening inquiries are limited to collecting information directly connected to the ability of the applicant to effectively perform volunteer work for SHIP. The SHIP Sub-Grantee applies a formal selection process to all prospective volunteers. This process varies according to the nature and degree of responsibility in the work to be done, access to money or other valuables, access to personal or confidential information, and/or access to beneficiaries or members of the public. Positions of trust are subject to significantly more rigorous screening inquiries.

### **3.12 Screening Authority**

Screening and acceptance decisions are made by authorized personnel only, typically the volunteer coordinator.

### **3.13 Equity and Human Rights Compliance**

While screening processes vary by role, applicants for any given role are screened in the same way as all other applicants for that same role. All screening inquiries and decisions comply with relevant human rights requirements.

### **3.14 Right of Refusal**

Acceptance as a volunteer is not automatic. The SHIP Sub-Grantee reserves the right not to accept applicants based on an objective and equitable assessment of their suitability.

### **3.15 Full Disclosure of Process and Volunteer Consent**

Prospective volunteers are notified early in the application process about the range of screening inquiries used by the SHIP Sub-Grantee for its various volunteer roles. No screening inquiry is undertaken without the prior knowledge and permission of the applicant. Prospective volunteers agree to the right of the SHIP Sub-Grantee to conduct appropriate inquiries regarding the background and qualifications of applicants and cooperate fully in the fulfillment of these checks. Prospective volunteers have the right to refuse permission for any line of screening inquiry, in which case the SHIP Sub-Grantee reserves the right to terminate the application process and refuse acceptance of the applicant as a SHIP volunteer. Applicants are informed of a projected timeline of the screening process at the time of their initial interview. They are updated if screening takes longer than expected. Prospective volunteers are informed of the

outcome of their application as expeditiously as possible, preferably within one week of the decision.

### **3.16 Application Form**

A standardized application form, as established by the SHIP Sub-Grantee, is completed by all prospective SHIP volunteers. An application template is available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

### **3.17 Interviews**

All prospective volunteers are interviewed by the SHIP Sub-Grantee to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, various roles with SHIP. An interview template is available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

### **3.18 Conflict of Interest**

No person who has a conflict of interest in connection with the work they will do at SHIP, whether personal, philosophical, or financial, may serve as a volunteer. Volunteers do not promote any personal or business interest while undertaking their SHIP assignment. It is the responsibility of the SHIP Sub-Grantee to screen for potential conflicts of interest and keep record of volunteer attestations regarding conflicts of interest.

### **3.19 Background Checks**

Background checks vary according to volunteer role and may include, but may not be limited to, verification of:

- Identity.
- Volunteer history and experience.
- Employment history and experience.
- Education.
- Social Security number.

### **3.20 Criminal Records Check**

All prospective volunteers applying for any position of trust at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency are subjected to a national-level criminal record check. The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a protocol for determining which criminal violations render an applicant unsuitable for SHIP assignments.

### **3.21 Confidentiality of Screening Information**

The confidentiality of information collected during volunteer screening is carefully protected. It may be shared with SHIP Sub-Grantee screening and hiring authorities as needed in the determination of volunteer suitability.

### **3.22 Revisions to the Screening Process**

Screening protocol is adjusted by the SHIP Sub-Grantee as roles change and as standards of care and due diligence recommend.

### **3.23 Placement**

When placing a volunteer in a role, attention is paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer role. Placements are not made unless the requirements of the volunteer, the role requirements, and the supervising staff can be met. Volunteers are not placed in roles where paid staff is unsupportive.

### **3.24 Acceptance and Appointment**

Service as a volunteer with the SHIP Sub-Grantee begins only with an official, written notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer role. No offer of acceptance is issued on a conditional basis (for example, pending the results of screening inquiries). An acceptance letter template is available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

## **4.0 Volunteer Program Management Policy Standards**

### **4.1 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to SHIP, its staff, and its beneficiaries. Volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal coworkers, the right to effective supervision, the right to be informed about significant matters affecting their roles and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, comply with these volunteer policies and other work-related direction and provisions, and remain loyal to the values, goals, and procedures of SHIP and the SHIP Sub-Grantee.

### **4.2 Volunteer Program Management System**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee ensures that an infrastructure is in place to support volunteer involvement and volunteer program management that, together, create effective, productive, safe, and rewarding volunteer involvement.

### **4.3 Volunteer Coordinator**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has at least one staff person with designated responsibility for coordinating and managing the involvement of volunteers. As required by program or budgetary limitations, this role may be shared among staff.

### **4.4 Resources for Volunteer Support and Involvement**

An annual budget for the volunteer management unit is formulated by the SHIP Sub-Grantee with input from the local volunteer coordinator.

### **4.5 Maintenance of Records**

A system of records is maintained by the SHIP Sub-Grantee on each volunteer, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Application and related information gathered in the screening process.
- Conflict of interest attestation.

- Current contact information.
- Dates of service.
- Positions held.
- Training and orientation received.
- Certification, if applicable.
- Duties performed and achievements attained.
- Performance records, including appropriate documentation of any performance issues.
- Awards received.
- Record of exit.

#### **4.6 Volunteer Access to Personnel Record**

Upon reasonable notice, volunteers may examine the contents of their own personnel files.

#### **4.7 Beneficiaries and Relatives as Volunteers**

Relatives of beneficiaries may serve as SHIP volunteers, but are not placed in a position of direct service or relationship to members of their family who are receiving services.

#### **4.8 Service at the Discretion of the SHIP**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of SHIP. Volunteers agree that the SHIP Sub-Grantee may at any time decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with SHIP or to make changes in the nature of a volunteer assignment. A volunteer may, at any time, for any reason, decide to sever her or his volunteer tenure with SHIP.

#### **4.9 Evaluation of Volunteer Involvement and Program Management System**

The volunteer coordinator for the Sub-Grantee conducts regular evaluations of both volunteer involvement and the infrastructure in place to support volunteer involvement in SHIP.

#### **4.10 Volunteer-Staff Interface**

Volunteer resources do not replace paid staff. The availability of volunteer resources is never a factor in the consideration of staff layoffs, terminations, or loss through attrition.

#### **4.11 Refusal of Assignments**

Volunteers are expected to refuse work assignments whenever an assignment exceeds the parameters of the volunteer role description, requires the volunteer to perform a function for which they have not been trained or are not qualified, or exceeds the limits of their individual capacity.

#### **4.12 Paid Staff Requests for Volunteers**

Requests from paid staff for volunteer assistance are communicated to the volunteer coordinator for the SHIP Sub-Grantee by interested staff. The volunteer coordinator recruits and places volunteers only in settings where the staff is clearly supportive of volunteer involvement and willing to work together with, and provide support for, volunteer participation.

#### **4.13 Worksite**

A safe and appropriate worksite is established by the SHIP Sub-Grantee for every volunteer.

#### **4.14 Leaves of Absence**

Volunteers who seek to take leaves of absence should provide as much advance notice as possible to the SHIP Sub-Grantee's volunteer coordinator and local supervisor.

#### **4.15 Probationary Period**

All new volunteers are placed on probation for a period of three months after their initial training is complete and they have been placed into a role. Adjustments are made wherever appropriate, including the possibility of placement into a different volunteer role that better suits the volunteer. If it is determined by either party during the probation period that involvement in the work of SHIP is not appropriate, termination can be immediate and without prior notice or reason provided by either party.

#### **4.16 Documenting Screening**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a screening documentation process that sets out what documentation is created, for how long it is retained, and when it is to be destroyed.

#### **4.17 Incomplete or False Information**

Providing incomplete or false information, including material omission or misrepresentation, at any point during screening is grounds for immediate disqualification from the application process, or immediate dismissal if the falsehood is discovered after acceptance.

#### **4.18 New Screening Standards for Current Volunteers**

All SHIP 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 that do not need to be initiated or repeated with existing SHIP volunteers.

#### **4.19 Reconfirmation of Screening**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a policy on how often various record checks (for example, criminal records checks, driver's records checks) will be repeated.

#### **4.20 Up-Screening**

Prospective volunteers are screened to the level of intensiveness dictated by the role(s) for which they apply. If a volunteer applies for transfer to another volunteer role for which the initial screening process is more intensive than for the role the volunteer has been occupying, the volunteer is subjected to the additional screening inquiries of the role being applied for. Failure to satisfactorily meet these additional screening requirements is grounds for denial of the transfer.

#### **4.21 Screening of Previous Volunteers**

Re-acceptance of previous SHIP volunteers is not automatic. Re-acceptance decisions are based on past performance and the results of any updated or additional screening inquiries undertaken by the SHIP Sub-Grantee in connection with the role for which the person is applying.

#### **4.22 Reassignment**

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new role receive all appropriate orientation, training, and up-screening before they begin work.

#### **4.23 Orientation**

All volunteers receive orientation on topics that include, but are not limited to:

- The purpose and values of SHIP.
- The nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited.
- The purpose, duties, and requirements of the role they are accepting.

Volunteers must fulfill all mandatory orientation requirements before any work is assigned to them by the SHIP Sub-Grantee.

Supervisors of volunteers who seek to become Basic Level SHIP certified to provide community outreach and/or direct counseling must submit [F-02000 ADRC/AGING/Tribal User Systems Access Request](#) to set up systems access to the SHIP Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) for the volunteer.

#### **4.24 Training**

Volunteers who conduct community outreach and/or who counsel clients directly must complete the SHIP basic training as outlined in the [ERI Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#) ([registering](#) using the SHIP Counselor role), including the specified [SHIP Technical Assistance \(TA\) Center](#) courses in the Online Counselor Certification Training (OCCT). Volunteers must fulfill mandatory training and certification requirements before any work is assigned.

For volunteer roles that do not involve direct client contact, minimum initial and ongoing volunteer training requirements are established by the SHIP Sub-Grantee in consultation with the state SHIP director and involve the delivery of a volunteer training program tailored to specific volunteer roles. Completing the SHIP basic training as outlined in the [ERI Learning Management System](#) is encouraged.

#### **4.25 Demonstrating Qualifications**

Following training, volunteers are tested on their knowledge and abilities for certain SHIP roles and must demonstrate minimum levels of comprehension and skill. For such roles, volunteers are not assigned duties until their qualification for the role is certified using the criteria and process required by SHIP.



To conduct community outreach and/or counsel clients directly, volunteers must pass the Basic Level SHIP Certification Exam in the SHIP TA Center's Online Counselor Certification Training (OCCT).

Staff who pass the Advanced Level SHIP Certification Exam are certified to provide counseling on Medicaid programs, appeals, and complex Medicare issues. Volunteers should refer clients to benefit specialists for assistance with complex issues. Should a volunteer seek to become certified to provide advanced counseling, their supervisor should consult with and seek approval from the Wisconsin SHIP director regarding the topics on which the volunteer seeks to counsel and the training and support that will be provided.

#### **4.26 On-the-Job Training**

Volunteers receive specific on-the-job training that provides the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training are appropriate to the complexity and demands of the role and the capabilities of the volunteer.

#### **4.27 Continuing Education**

At the discretion of the state SHIP director, update and/or recertification training is required for some volunteer roles. Volunteers who are not able to meet required continuing education requirements for their role are respectfully removed from service in that role by the SHIP Sub-Grantee.

#### **4.28 Components**

A constructive, positive, and success-oriented performance management system is in place at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency.

#### **4.29 Local Supervisor's Role**

Local supervisors of volunteers at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency follow SHIP Sub-Grantee performance management policies and procedures in their day-to-day work with volunteers.

SHIP volunteers must have access to a SHIP certified supervisor who is available for consultation.

#### **4.30 Notice of Performance Management System**

Volunteers are advised of the existence of the volunteer performance management system during their initial orientation with the SHIP Sub-Grantee.

#### **4.31 Right of Supervision and Support**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has both the right and the obligation to provide supervision and support, to manage the work done by volunteers, and to determine the nature and extent of local supervisory guidance provided to volunteers.

#### **4.32 The Nature of Supervision and Support**

Supervision and support of SHIP volunteers reflects the principle of positive, constructive, and success-oriented guidance that underpins the SHIP volunteer performance management system.

#### **4.33 Acceptance of Supervision**

Upon acceptance into service with the SHIP Sub-Grantee, volunteers agree to accept supervision and support from designated local supervisory personnel.

#### **4.34 Requirement of a Local supervisor**

Each volunteer who is accepted to a SHIP role has an identified local supervisor who is responsible for direct supervision and support of that volunteer.

#### **4.35 Lines of Communication**

Volunteers receive all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments from the SHIP Sub-Grantee. Accordingly, volunteers are included in and have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials, meetings, and consumer records relevant to work assignments.

#### **4.36 Evaluation of Performance**

Volunteers receive periodic evaluation of their work by the SHIP Sub-Grantee. Templates for volunteer evaluations are available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

#### **4.37 Documenting Performance**

The substance and outcomes of volunteer performance evaluations are documented by the local supervisor and placed in the volunteer's personnel file at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency.

#### **4.38 Communication with the Volunteer Management Unit**

The volunteer coordinator at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency is informed immediately of any substantial change in the work or status of a volunteer and is consulted in advance before any corrective action is taken.

#### **4.39 Progressive Corrective Action**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee 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.

#### **4.40 Performance Management Review and Appeals Procedures**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a corrective action review and appeals procedure in place. Volunteers are made aware of the appeals procedure upon acceptance into volunteer service.

#### **4.41 Grievance/Complaint Procedure**

Volunteers with complaints or grievances with staff, other volunteers, beneficiaries, or partner organizations communicate these to their local supervisor. If the complaint involves the volunteer's own local supervisor, the volunteer conveys the complaint to the next person in the

chain of command at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency, typically the volunteer coordinator. All complaints will be treated as confidential.

The SHIP program, per its grant parameters, cannot provide staff and volunteers protection from liability for the provision of incorrect information.

#### **4.42 Investigation of Outside Complaints**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a process for investigating and resolving complaints from beneficiaries and other outside parties against volunteers.

#### **4.43 Resignation**

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the SHIP Sub-Grantee at any time and for any reason. Volunteers who intend to resign provide as much advance notice of their departure as possible, along with the reason for their decision. Beneficiaries 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 the SHIP Sub-Grantee to their designated local supervisor. An exit letter template is available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

#### **4.44 Clarification of Meaning**

It is the volunteer's responsibility to seek clarification from the SHIP Sub-Grantee about policies, as needed. Not understanding a policy is not acceptable grounds for failure to comply.

#### **4.45 Volunteer Conduct**

SHIP volunteers perform their duties in an objective, timely, and conscientious manner. They act in a knowledgeable manner at all times, consistent with their training and these policies.

#### **4.46 Boundaries and Ethics**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee clearly communicates role boundaries to volunteers. Volunteers recognize and respect the limits of their skills and abilities, and the boundaries and limitations of their role. If a volunteer is in doubt regarding the limitations of his or her role, the volunteer does not take any action until they receive direction on the matter from the volunteer's local supervisor, the volunteer coordinator, or another authorized SHIP representative within the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency.

#### **4.47 Provision of Services**

Volunteers provide service in a responsible and objective fashion, without regard to the background or characteristics of beneficiaries. Volunteers provide current and accurate information and seek additional assistance or information when in doubt, or when specialized knowledge or expertise is required. Volunteers do not recommend or endorse specific services, providers, or products to beneficiaries. Volunteers do not make plan choices or decisions for beneficiaries.

#### **4.48 Representation of the SHIP**

Volunteers are agents of the SHIP Sub-Grantee while functioning in their assigned volunteer roles. Volunteers are not spokespeople for SHIP or the SHIP Sub-Grantee in any formal sense and do not represent themselves as such.

#### **4.49 Use of SHIP Affiliation**

Volunteers may not use their affiliation with SHIP or the SHIP Sub-Grantee in connection with partisan politics, religious matters, business dealings, or community issues. Volunteers do not sell, recommend, or endorse any specific insurance or medical product, agent or company, or promote religious or political beliefs, perspectives, or practice.

#### **4.50 Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as volunteers, whether this information involves a member of staff, a volunteer, a beneficiary, or other person, or involves the overall business of SHIP. Volunteers take all steps necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of all SHIP- and beneficiary-related information and to prevent personal information of beneficiaries from falling into the possession of unauthorized people. Volunteers use any information collected or obtained in the course of their SHIP work only to assist beneficiaries or otherwise fulfill volunteer role responsibilities. No information collected or obtained in the course of SHIP work is disclosed other than when clearly approved by an authorized SHIP representative. There is zero tolerance for breaches of confidentiality in connection with work for the SHIP Sub-Grantee.

Volunteers who have a Unique ID will follow federal guidance regarding privacy and confidentiality training to maintain their Unique ID.

#### **4.51 Recording of Volunteer Time and Activity**

Volunteers accurately complete and submit required information on their volunteer activity on a timely basis. This may include timesheets, client or media contacts, activity reporting in STARS, and other reports.

#### **4.52 Absenteeism**

Volunteers are expected to be reliable and punctual. When expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers inform their local supervisors as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. It is neither the responsibility nor the right of volunteers to find or assign an alternate person to perform their work for the SHIP Sub-Grantee.

#### **4.53 Harassment**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all personnel and beneficiaries. No one has to put up with harassment for any reason, at any time. No one has the right to harass anyone else at the SHIP Sub-Grantee workplace or in any situation related to SHIP programs and services. The SHIP Sub-Grantee treats all complaints of harassment seriously, whether they are made informally or formally. Action is taken on all

complaints to ensure that they are resolved quickly, confidentially, and fairly. Corrective action will be taken with anyone who has harassed a person or group of people.

#### **4.54 Drugs and Alcohol**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee operates a work environment that is free of alcohol and drug use or abuse. This is a zero tolerance policy. Noncompliance is grounds for immediate dismissal. The possession or consumption of alcohol or illicit drugs, or the misuse of prescription or "over-the-counter" drugs, is prohibited on SHIP Sub-Grantee premises or worksites, or in circumstances deemed by the SHIP Sub-Grantee to present a serious risk to the interests of SHIP in terms of the safety of volunteers, paid staff, or beneficiaries; service quality; or the organization's reputation. Volunteers do not use, possess, transfer, distribute, manufacture, or sell alcohol or any illegal drug while on SHIP Sub-Grantee property, while on duty, or while driving to or from a SHIP 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 their ability to perform work in a safe and productive manner, notify their local supervisors prior to engaging in SHIP work.

#### **4.55 Acceptance of Gifts**

SHIP volunteers do not accept gifts from beneficiaries, their families, caregivers, or other representatives. Any such offerings are respectfully and tactfully declined, citing, as needed, this policy as the basis for their action.

#### **4.56 Acceptance of Honoraria**

SHIP volunteers do not accept honoraria. Any such offerings are respectfully and tactfully declined, citing, as needed, this policy as the basis for the action. SHIP volunteers may accept, on behalf of the SHIP Sub-Grantee, honoraria that are given to the SHIP program or the SHIP Sub-Grantee.

#### **4.57 Access to SHIP Property and Materials**

As appropriate, volunteers have access to property of the SHIP Sub-Grantee and those materials and equipment necessary to fulfill their duties. Volunteers receive training in the operation of any work-related equipment and have the same responsibilities as paid staff regarding the safe use and maintenance of SHIP Sub-Grantee equipment and materials. SHIP Sub-Grantee property and materials are used only when directly required for the volunteer's task.

#### **4.58 Relationships with Beneficiaries**

Volunteer relationships with beneficiaries have the same boundaries as those between paid staff and beneficiaries. It is appropriate to be friendly, courteous, and caring but it is not appropriate to become friends with beneficiaries, their family members, or others connected to the delivery of service. Friendships with beneficiaries can lead to unclear boundaries, inappropriate expectations, the appearance of favoritism or exploitation, and conflicts of interest. Invitations to SHIP volunteers from beneficiaries to spend personal time together, or to engage in activities other than SHIP business, are declined respectfully, citing, as needed, this policy as the basis for the action. Volunteers treat all beneficiaries with courtesy and respect.

Volunteers respect the personal boundaries of beneficiaries and govern their physical behaviors accordingly.

#### **4.59 Financial Transactions with Clients**

SHIP volunteers do not enter into financial transactions—lending or borrowing in either direction—with beneficiaries, their family members, or caregivers.

#### **4.60 Political Issues**

Volunteers do not engage in political activities, campaigning, or lobbying during volunteer hours. While on SHIP duty, volunteers do not:

- Publicly express their personal opinions regarding political issues.
- Display or distribute political signs or materials on their person or at worksites.
- Solicit or accept contributions for political purposes during volunteer hours.

#### **4.61 Cultural Sensitivity**

Volunteers are trained in the norms of identified consumer groups and cultures. Volunteers demonstrate respect for the norms and cultures of beneficiaries with whom they work and are sensitive to consumers' beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles. Because excellent communication is a key to success in most SHIP volunteer roles, volunteers are placed according to their ability to communicate effectively with beneficiaries and participants from diverse populations.

#### **4.62 Labor Actions**

When a worksite is affected by a labor dispute, the volunteer coordinator, in consultation with SHIP Sub-Grantee management, determines whether it is appropriate for volunteers to continue their duties at the SHIP Sub-Grantee worksite and/or in alternative settings. Where it is determined that volunteers may continue their duties, no pressure or judgment is placed on volunteers who choose not to volunteer for the duration of the dispute. When volunteers do stay involved during a labor dispute, they undertake only their regularly assigned duties, and are not asked and do not take their own initiative to perform any additional duties.

#### **4.63 Recognition**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a system for recognizing and rewarding the work done by volunteers, both individually and collectively.

#### **4.64 Informal Recognition**

Paid staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency regularly provide recognition of volunteer service.

#### **4.65 Feedback on Results**

Whenever possible, the SHIP Sub-Grantee provides feedback to volunteers on the results of their work, including data on volunteer contributions that allow the SHIP Sub-Grantee to meet its service goals.

#### **4.66 Volunteer Relationships with Paid Staff**

Volunteers and paid staff are partners in implementing the mission and programs of the SHIP Sub-Grantee, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. Each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other. Paid staff members do not make unreasonable demands on volunteers, or request that volunteers exceed the boundaries of their role description or the limits of their individual capacity.

#### **4.67 Responsibilities of Local Supervisors of Volunteers**

Staff at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency who supervise volunteers provide oversight similar to that provided to paid employees.

#### **4.68 Volunteer Management Training for Members of Staff**

An orientation to working with volunteers is provided to all paid staff at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency.

### **5.0 Volunteer Departure**

#### **5.1 Dismissal of a Volunteer**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, policies, or procedures of the SHIP Sub-Grantee or who repeatedly fail to perform a volunteer assignment satisfactorily, despite local supervisory support and other corrective action interventions, are subject to dismissal. The SHIP Sub-Grantee establishes grounds for dismissal of volunteers. Individual situations vary and local supervisors and the volunteer coordinator use discretion and good judgment in all decisions regarding possible volunteer dismissal. Procedural guidelines and letter templates related to volunteer dismissal are available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

#### **5.2 Immediate Dismissal**

Some behaviors are so unacceptable that they are simply not tolerated by the SHIP Sub-Grantee. Such behaviors trigger immediate dismissal of volunteers from all SHIP volunteer service. When there is sufficient information to indicate that the unacceptable behavior has taken place, the volunteer is immediately relieved of his or her duties. The SHIP Sub-Grantee establishes a policy regarding the behaviors that would result in immediate dismissal, in addition to the behaviors outlined below.

The following behaviors should result in a volunteer's immediate dismissal:

- Willful and knowing breaking of confidentiality rules
- Failure to mitigate a conflict of interest within an established time period
- Use of drugs or alcohol while volunteering
- Aggression towards staff, volunteers, customers, or other individuals

Individual situations vary, and local supervisors and the volunteer coordinator use discretion and good judgment in all decisions regarding possible volunteer dismissal. Procedural guidelines

and letter templates related to volunteer dismissal are available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

### **5.3 Notice of Departure of a Volunteer**

When a volunteer departs from the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is reassigned to a new role, the volunteer coordinator at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency provides written notice of such to all affected SHIP clients and personnel (paid and unpaid). Templates for exit interviews and letters are available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

If the volunteer had a SHIP Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) or SHIP TA Center account, SHIP Sub-Grantee agencies must submit [F-02000 ADRC/AGING/Tribal User Systems Access Request](#) to have the departed volunteer's account(s) deactivated.

### **5.4 Reassignment of Work and Cessation of Work Relationships**

When a volunteer is dismissed, the working relationship with the SHIP program, its services, personnel, and beneficiaries is irrevocably severed. Volunteers are informed that further SHIP program- or service-related functioning and connections with SHIP personnel, partners, and beneficiaries cease upon dismissal. Templates for dismissal letters are available on the [GWAAR Volunteer Resources webpage](#).

## **6.0 Information Technology Policy Standards**

### **6.1 Information Procedures**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has in place an information management protocol that outlines procedures to control volunteer access to and use of beneficiary information, and outlines the safe operation of computers used to collect and store program and beneficiary information. The protocol also specifies appropriate and inappropriate use of SHIP Sub-Grantee computers by volunteers.

### **6.2 Internet Protocol**

The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a protocol for use of the Internet and email, and cover appropriate access to web sites. The SHIP Sub-Grantee has in place a protocol and appropriate training for volunteers who use wireless devices to connect to the Internet while performing SHIP work. The SHIP Sub-Grantee has a protocol and appropriate training for volunteers who make use of their personal computers while performing SHIP work.

### **6.3 Reporting Stolen or Lost Consumer Information**

If data is misplaced or stolen, volunteers immediately notify their local supervisor at the SHIP Sub-Grantee agency so that appropriate notification can be made to affected beneficiaries and authorities. Future safeguards are instituted as appropriate.

### **6.4 SHIP Reporting Software Use**

All of the information security policies related to general computer and internet use also apply to SHIP national data reporting software use.



## **6.5 Use of Social Media by Volunteers**

Social media should be used responsibly by volunteers. The same principles and policies that apply to volunteer behavior in any volunteer role also apply to all activities online.