

## **Mentoring**

### **Arizona SHIP**

New SHIP Counselors are mentored by experienced volunteers or staff members before they begin counseling on their own. New Counselors shadow their mentors for at least 16 hours and learn firsthand how to assist beneficiaries with Medicare issues.

Counselors begin helping clients once they feel ready and their mentors assist them until they feel fairly confident counseling on their own.

Mentoring has been part of the Arizona SHIP training program for more than eight years. Counselors really like the mentoring process, and report that it gives them more confidence to counsel on their own.

### **Connecticut CHOICES**

Mentoring is available to interested volunteers, although it is not currently a formal part of the CHOICES training and certification process.

### **Indiana SHIP**

After the initial training, new volunteers are mentored for 45 days by an experienced volunteer or staff member. Mentors teach new volunteers about the counseling process, address their questions, and help them gain confidence to counsel on their own. Indiana's mentoring program is new and is not yet part its volunteer certification process. It was created in response to feedback from new volunteers who sometimes felt "left out on their own" after the initial training (especially in rural areas). So far, new volunteers have found that mentoring helps them increase their skills and confidence and also build relationships.

### **Iowa SHIIP**

After volunteers complete the initial training, they are encouraged (but not required) to co-counsel with an experienced SHIIP volunteer. SHIIP plans to encourage this practice more in the future, as it can help new volunteers gain experience and confidence.

### **Massachusetts SHINE**

After volunteers complete the initial training and competency "exam," they are matched with experienced mentors. The mentors may be fellow counselors or Regional SHINE Directors. New volunteers shadow their mentors for approximately six counseling sessions, as they meet with clients or make phone calls. After a couple of sessions, the new volunteers begin counseling clients and their mentors are present to observe and assist. Once they're comfortable, volunteers begin helping clients independently.

### **Oregon SHIBA**

New volunteers are paired with experienced SHIBA mentors. Volunteers spend at least 10 hours shadowing their mentors, until they feel ready to try counseling on their own. The method of shadowing varies according to the local program. Where possible, mentoring is done in person. If that's not possible, it can also be done remotely by phone or via the Internet. Once new volunteers are ready to counsel independently, they apply for a Unique ID and receive an official name badge that bears the State seal.

### **Washington SHIBA Helpline**

After SHIBA volunteers complete their initial training, they are informally mentored by an experienced volunteer or staff member. Their mentors show them the ropes and help them learn firsthand how to work with clients. New volunteers may be mentored in-person or over the phone, which can sometimes be tricky if both people aren't in the same office. Depending upon the experience and comfort levels of the new volunteers, the mentoring process can last one to six months. Once new volunteers feel confident, they can take the reins and do the counseling themselves.