

Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA)

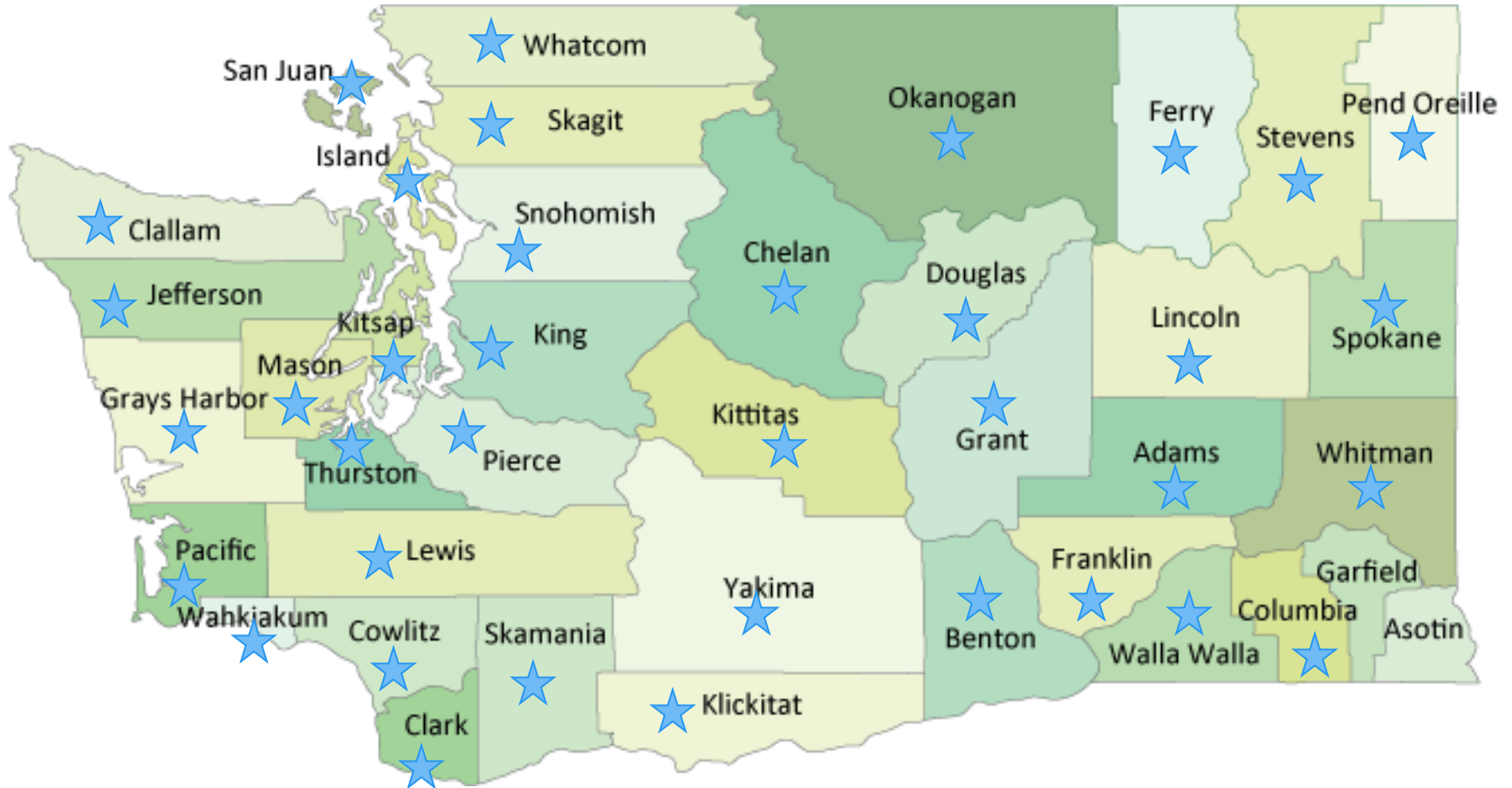


Revised – Jan. 23, 2024

SHIBA 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.

Our sponsors



Note: Star doesn't represent actual location

SHIBA celebrates 45 years

SHIBA celebrates 45 years of helping people on Medicare!

- In 1976, a small group of volunteers, known as Health Insurance Referral Services, were part of a pilot program in Mount Vernon. They helped counsel senior citizens on health insurance, Medicare and Medicaid.
- In 1978, the OIC's Consumer Protection Deputy Commissioner helped the group become SHIBA, which then stood for Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advisors.
- In 1979, the state's Insurance Commissioner Dick Marquardt, officially endorsed SHIBA as a statewide project with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner.
- Later on, SHIBA inspired the federal government in 1990 to create a model, called the national State Health Insurance Programs (SHIPs).
- Today, there are SHIPs in all 50 states, plus Puerto Rico, Guam, the District of Columbia and the US Virgin Islands.

What we do

- With a Medicare emphasis, provide **free, unbiased** information about health care coverage & access
- We train volunteers to **confidentially** counsel consumers in their own communities about:
 - Government programs
 - Accessing the Exchange
 - Prescription plan review
 - Private insurance
- 16 sponsoring agencies serving all counties
- Manage 225 volunteers statewide (~30 volunteers in King County)

We serve everyone, but target

- People of all ages and backgrounds
- People with disabilities & specific diseases
- Seniors and pre-retirees
- Dual eligibles with Medicaid
- People with mental health needs
- Ethnic & multilingual populations
- Uninsured people
- Rural populations
- People with low income

Ways we help consumers

- Assess health coverage needs
- Determine general eligibility for programs
- Evaluate and compare policies/programs
- Make referrals to other agencies and programs
- Collect and report possible fraud complaints

Our resource limits

- We can't recommend a health insurance plan, company or agent
- We don't help with solving medical billing issues
- We are not case workers, but we:
 - Do provide enrollment help
 - Speak with 1-800-Medicare on clients' behalf
 - Enter Medicare complaints on clients' behalf

Community outreach

- "Welcome to Medicare" and "Medicare Open Enrollment" Presentations to the public.
- Partner with community, senior centers and local colleges



Types of counseling we offer

- Medicare Open Enrollment (Part D & Medicare Advantage)
- Medicare Supplement (Medigap) plans
- How Medicare works with other programs
- How to get help paying for Medicare
- Social Security's role in Medicare
- Options for people under age 65

How to contact us

Solid Ground SHIBA King County Intake Line:

206.753.4806

shiba@solid-ground.org

Statewide toll free: 1-800-562-6900

TDD: 360-586-0241

TDD Relay: 1-800-833-6384

The web:

[Health Care & Public Benefits - Solid Ground \(solid-ground.org\)](https://www.solid-ground.org)

www.insurance.wa.gov/shiba