



# SMP

Senior Medicare Patrol

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## Preventing Medicare Fraud

*Empowering and assisting Medicare beneficiaries,  
their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud,  
errors, and abuse.*

# Illinois SMP Volunteer Handbook

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By: Ally Cassity & Ned Wagner

## Table of Contents

Senior Medicare Patrol Mission Statement.....	3
Welcome to the Illinois Senior Medical Patrol Team.....	4
Welcome and Thank You from ACL.....	5
<b>Part One - What is Senior Medicare Patrol?</b>	
What is the SMP Program? .....	7
History and Milestones of the SMP Program .....	9
National SMP Program Milestones .....	10
History of the SMP Program in Illinois.....	12
<b>Part Two - Getting Started</b>	
What Should I Expect as an SMP Volunteer? (FAQ) .....	14
Volunteer Roles .....	16
Orientation and Training.....	17
Orientation .....	17
Training Programs.....	17
Recognition.....	19
Illinois SMP Organizational Structure.....	20
Illinois SMP Main Office Location and Staff Contacts.....	21
Illinois SMP Program Partner Agencies .....	22
<b>Part Three - Policies &amp; Procedures</b>	
Rights and Responsibilities.....	24
Volunteers with Disabilities .....	27
Volunteer Risk and Program Management Policies .....	28
Background Checks.....	30
Compliance .....	31

Confidentiality .....	32
Insurance .....	33
Volunteer Roles that Require Travel .....	34
Illinois SMP Volunteer Venue Site Safety.....	35
Performance Management.....	36
Volunteer Separation.....	38
Exit Interview.....	39
Appendix A: Illinois SMP Volunteer Screening Process .....	40
Appendix B: Illinois SMP Reporting.....	41
Appendix C: Illinois SMP Incident Reporting Form .....	42
Appendix D: Illinois SMP Program Volunteer Driver Safety Guidelines .....	44
Appendix E: Illinois SMP Safety Checklist for Venue Sites.....	47
Volunteer Checklist for Day of Event: .....	48
Appendix F: Illinois SMP Severe Weather and Disaster Safety Policy.....	49
Appendix G: Illinois SMP Information Technology Policy .....	51
Handling and Reporting Sensitive Information to SMP .....	51
Using Computers at Partner Agencies.....	51
Using Personal Computers for Outreach .....	52
SIRS .....	52
Appendix H: Illinois SMP Volunteer Role Descriptions.....	53
Appendix I: Illinois SMP Volunteer Handbook Verification Form.....	54
Abbreviations and Acronyms .....	55

## Senior Medicare Patrol Mission Statement

The mission of the SMP program is to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.

## Welcome to the Illinois Senior Medical Patrol Team!

Dear SMP Volunteer,

We are thrilled to have you join our team! The work that you will be engaging in as a SMP volunteer is of tremendous importance. Your knowledge of your community and the relationships you have created will enable you to empower seniors in your community to protect themselves by preventing, detecting, and reporting Medicare fraud, abuse, and errors. Below is a quote from former Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on the importance of SMP volunteers.

*"...We know that one of the most effective and direct steps we can take to improve Medicare's long-term health is ridding the program of waste, fraud, and abuse. And for the last 14 years, the Senior Medicare Patrol has been on the front lines of that fight. No one feels more strongly about keeping criminals out of Medicare than seniors themselves. When someone defrauds Medicare, it means higher premiums and co-pays for beneficiaries. It also threatens the program that they have worked so hard for – and that they want to make sure is there for their children and grandchildren."*

The education you will provide to Medicare beneficiaries will not only help them protect themselves from fraud, but also help to preserve and protect Medicare funds throughout the State of Illinois. Your value as a SMP volunteer is immeasurable.

The SMP Volunteer Coordinator whom you have already met, will guide you through the application and background check process. They will also support you through the training process and connect you with one of our SMP host agencies, depending on your location. The host agency will provide you with volunteer opportunities in your area, but the SMP Volunteer Coordinator will always be available to you throughout your volunteer experience to answer questions and provide support so be sure to save their contact information!

Once again, thank you and welcome to the Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol Team!

Sincerely,



Travis Trumitch  
Director, Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol

## Welcome and Thank You from ACL

On behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Community Living (ACL), I want to welcome you to the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) volunteer program and thank you for volunteering in the effort to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse.

In recent years, ACL's partners in this effort—the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Justice (DOJ), and Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)—have created the resources needed to identify and prosecute criminals who steal hundreds of millions of dollars each year from Medicare and related health insurance programs. These partners use sophisticated technology and skilled local investigative and enforcement teams to ensure that this important work can be done.

However, nothing is more effective at preventing healthcare fraud than educated, informed, empowered consumers. For example, tips from Medicare beneficiaries helped take down a fraud scheme in Illinois involving false claims for hospice services. The investigation ultimately led to a judgment of over \$37 million in restitution.

Those tips likely would never have been made without the extensive outreach and educational efforts of the Florida Senior Medicare Patrol – the same outreach and educational work that you and other SMP volunteers in your state are being trained to do or support. Preventing fraud takes a lot of time, preparation, and hard work. Volunteers like you bear a heavy part of that load – often without seeing the most direct or obvious rewards.

Sometimes SMP efforts contribute to an official investigative takedown. Thankfully, we have identified proven methods and messaging to help prevent fraud before it ever takes place. This effort is impossible to fully measure, but the benefits for Medicare and America's seniors and people with disabilities are enormous. Since 1965, Medicare has been one of our country's greatest success stories. Since 1997, SMP has helped protect this essential program and the beneficiaries it serves. We have a responsibility to keep this program strong for generations to come and we can't do that without you. Thank you for volunteering with SMP.

Sincerely,

Marissa Whitehouse

Administration for Community Living

# Part One

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## What is Senior Medicare Patrol?



## What is the SMP Program?

**What does the SMP Program do?** The SMP program, also known as Senior Medicare Patrol program, helps Medicare and dually eligible Medicare-Medicaid beneficiaries prevent, detect, and prevent health care fraud. In doing so, they help protect older people and promote integrity in the Medicare program. Because this work often requires face-to-face contact to be most effective, SMPs recruit-volunteers nationwide to support this effort. SMP volunteers serve in many ways, including outreach, education, and one-on-one counseling. Most are Medicare beneficiaries themselves and are thus well-positioned to assist their peers.

SMP team members, including paid staff and volunteers, conduct outreach to Medicare beneficiaries in their communities through group presentations, exhibiting at community events, answering calls to SMP helplines, and meeting individually with clients. Their main goal is to teach Medicare beneficiaries how to:

- Protect their personal identity.
- Identify and report errors on their health care bills.
- Identify deceptive health care practices, such as illegal marketing, providing unnecessary or inappropriate services, and charging for services that were never provided.

In some cases, SMPs do more than educate. When Medicare beneficiaries cannot act on their own behalf to address these problems, the SMPs work with beneficiaries, family caregivers, and others to address the problems, and if necessary, make referrals to outside organizations that can intervene.

**How does the SMP Program Work?** SMPs are discretionary grant projects funded by the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL). ACL is headed by the assistant secretary for aging, who is appointed by the president and serves under the U.S. secretary for Health and Human Services.

Every five years, ACL issues a new request for proposals for the SMP program and then competitively awards grants to a selected project in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

At the state and local levels, SMPs rely on hundreds of partnerships with host organizations that include Area Agencies on Aging, faith-based organizations, and State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs), to help achieve the program's goals. Paid staff members at host organizations sometimes are responsible for recruiting and supervising SMP volunteers.

The 54 SMP projects have been supported by the same ACL-funded national resource center since 2003. The SMP Resource Center provides a website, content on several social media



platforms, a national toll-free number and info@ mailbox to assist the public in finding their SMP, and various newsletters with content for or about the SMP program. You can contact the SMP Resource Center at [www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org), call 877-808-2468 or email the Resource Center by filling out the contact us form at <https://smpresource.org/contact-us/>. The Center also provides training, resources, and direct technical assistance to the 54 SMP projects nationwide. The SMP Resource Center is funded through a competitive grant that is awarded every five years.

SMP activities support ACL's broader goals of promoting increased choice and greater independence among older adults. The activities of the SMP program also serve to enhance the financial, emotional, physical, and mental well-being of older adults -- thereby increasing their capacity to maintain security and independence in retirement and to make better financial and health care choices.

**How does the SMP Program work in Illinois?** In Illinois, the SMP Program is coordinated by AgeOptions. Over the past 28 years, AgeOptions has been a leader in the fight against health care fraud in Illinois, first as part of the "Operation Restore Trust" demonstration project in 1995 and then as the host of the Illinois SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program since it began in 1997.

To provide outreach and education to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries across Illinois, AgeOptions works with 13 partners statewide. These partner agencies include all of the Illinois Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), White Crane Wellness Center, and the Coalition of Limited English-Speaking Elderly. SMP volunteers work with each of these partner agencies and AgeOptions to spread the SMP message of Protect, Detect, and Report to beneficiaries in the community via presentations, community fairs, or meeting one-on-one.

## History and Milestones of the SMP Program

In 1995, the Administration on Aging (AoA) became a partner in a government-led effort to fight fraud, errors, and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs through a groundbreaking demonstration project called Operation Restore Trust (ORT). ORT's purpose was to coordinate and target federal, state, local, and private resources on those areas most plagued by abuse. Operation Restore Trust was announced at the 1995 White House Conference on Aging. The initiative focused on five states where fraud and abuse was most prevalent: California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas.

ORT brought together several agencies within the federal Department of Health and Human Services, including the Health Care Financing Administration (now the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services or CMS), the Office of Inspector General and the Administration on Aging, to fight health care fraud, errors, and abuse. These agencies also worked with partners in law enforcement such as the federal Department of Justice and state and local authorities.

In 1996, Congress enacted the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 (P.L. 104-191). Although HIPAA is best known for rules that protect patient confidentiality, the law also created the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control (HCFAC) program and authorized funding for AoA to support the effective training and mobilization of senior volunteers who provide consumer education to beneficiaries.

Another law enacted in that same session of Congress—the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1997 (P.L. 104-208)—affirmed AoA's role as a key partner in the fight against health care fraud by establishing the program that would come to be called the Senior Medicare Patrol program in 12 local demonstration projects. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) offered legislative language that directed the AoA to form projects that would recruit and train retired doctors, nurses, and other professionals to identify and report errors, fraud, and abuse.

A Senate Report explained the rationale for the newly created program by saying, "senior citizens are our best front-line defense against these losses [from health care fraud and abuse], but they don't have the information and experience needed" to recognize and accurately report cases of errors, fraud, and abuse. The Senior Medicare Patrol would address this problem through volunteers who provide *consumer education* which is, along with provider education, one of the five primary purposes that the HIPAA lists as an authorized use of HCFAC funding.

As a result of this Congressional action, SMP volunteers are now at work in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. They teach their peers to protect themselves against fraud, safeguard Medicare numbers, and examine Medicare Summary Notices and other documents to detect discrepancies and report suspicious activity. Allocations through the Older Americans Act and the HCFAC program help fund SMP program operations. Also, AoA is now the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

## *National SMP Program Milestones*

- 1995 – Operation Restore Trust (ORT) brings together the Administration on Aging and other federal agencies in a coordinated effort to fight Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse.
- 1997 – Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act establishes 12 demonstration projects to “utilize the skills and expertise of retired professionals in identifying and reporting errors, fraud, and abuse.” HIPAA provides Health Care Fraud & Abuse Control program funding to AoA for consumer education.
- 1998 - In the program’s first year, more than 3,600 volunteers delivered 1,300 education and counseling sessions that reached 41,000 people. AoA increases the number of cooperative agreements for the program from 12 to 18.
- 2002 - AoA convenes its first National Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program Conference in Washington, D.C. Its purpose is to share successful practices, strengthen collaboration between federal, state, and local partners, and honor outstanding senior volunteers. 51 Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) projects, located in 45 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, are in operation.
- 2003 – AoA convenes three regional Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program Conferences in the DC area, Dallas, and Seattle. The SMP program has projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- 2004 – The National Consumer Protection Technical Resource Center (The Center) is established to provide technical assistance, resources, information, and support to 57 Senior Medicare Patrol Projects (SMPs) nationwide.
- 2006 – Personal Health Care Journals were created and distributed by AoA to SMPs for the public to record what happens at health care appointments to compare to their Medicare statements.
- 2007 – SMART FACTS reporting system launches and AoA introduces a national SMP logo and outreach materials.
- 2011 – The Department of Health & Human Services, through AoA, launches a national public awareness campaign about Senior Medicare Patrol with Fraud Prevention Public Service Announcements (PSAs), fact sheets, and other information resources. AoA provides media toolkits, training, and support to the SMPs to ensure effective placement and response to the PSAs. Also, SMPs receive special capacity building grants enabling many to hire Coordinators of Volunteers.

- 2011 – Working with volunteer management consultant Linda Graff and Associates, AoA and the SMP Resource Center disseminate a comprehensive set of new volunteer risk and program management policies that will take effect in stages over three years, beginning in June 2013.
- 2012 – April 16, 2012 – the Administration on Aging (AoA), the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), and the HHS Office on Disability come together to become the Administration on Community Living (ACL).
- 2013 – The National Consumer Protection Technical Resource Center is renamed to the SMP National Resource Center.
- 2015 – SIRS, the SMP Information and Reporting System, rolls out to the SMP network. SIRS is the nationwide, web-based data collection and reporting system that facilitates reporting of SMP activities including: individual interactions, group outreach and education, media outreach and education, and team member information.
- 2016 – SMP grants are fully funded by the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program (HCFAC).
- 2016 – ACL updates the Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) policies to revise and streamline them for use by both SMPs and SHIPs.
- 2017 – ACL creates a nationally branded bookmark and brochure for the SMP program to use for outreach and education.
- 2017 – May 1, 2017, is the launch date of the SMP Resource Center's national Facebook page. The goals of the page are to be a national presence for the SMP program and also to serve as resources for state SMP projects to use.
- 2021 – The Personal Health Care Journals (PHCJs) are updated to better fit the needs of beneficiaries and families. The name is changed to My Health Care Tracker to fit the new functionality of the tracker as well as upcoming SMP Resource Center's mobile application that will house a digital version of this tracker.
- 2022 – ACL updates the SMP logo from a blue and green color scheme to a dark blue, light blue, and orange color scheme with a prominent check mark.
- 2022 – June 5, 2022, starts the first Medicare Fraud Prevention Week. The national week draws attention to the SMP program and the actions everyone can take to prevent Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.

## *History of the SMP Program in Illinois*

- 1995 – AgeOptions in Oak Park, IL is chosen as one of the original Operation Restore Trust (ORT) grantees.
- 1997 – AgeOptions works with all of the Area Agencies on Aging in Illinois to expand SMP outreach into a statewide program.
- 2003 – Three Illinois SMP volunteers were recognized by AoA for their commitment to SMP outreach.
- 2010 – Illinois SMP received Expansion grant and hires additional staff to support volunteers and assist consumers with complaints.
- 2011 – AgeOptions receives three awards at the National SMP Conference. One Illinois SMP volunteer also received an award.
- 2014 – Illinois SMP reached 30,561 people with the SMP message.
- 2014 – Illinois SMP has 54 active volunteers who contributed 1,060 hours.
- 2020- With the onset of COVID-19, AgeOptions is the first SMP in the country to convert to fully digital online presentations. Travis Trumitch, IL SMP Director, is named by ACL as Chairman of How to Work and Present Remotely
- 2022 – Illinois SMP reached 12,461 people with the SMP message.
- 2022- Travis Trumitch, IL SMP Director, receives Fraud Prevention’s Finest Award for Outreach in recognition of the new and innovated outreach efforts conducted by Illinois SMP.
- 2022-2023- AgeOptions/Illinois SMP Media Campaign received 23,821,176 impressions.
- 2023- AgeOptions receives another 5-year grant award to continue all of their hard work throughout Illinois.

# Part Two

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## Getting Started



## What Should I Expect as an SMP Volunteer? (FAQ)

### **How many SMP activities am I responsible for doing?**

Volunteers are expected to participate in at least two SMP activities per year.

### **How will I know when and where my volunteer activities are?**

Your contact at your host agency will be made aware of your availability and will contact you about potential SMP activities accordingly.

### **Do I have to participate in all activities presented to me by my host agency?**

You are not obligated to say yes to all SMP activities that your host provides to you.

If you know anything about your availability for the year, let your host agency supervisor know during your orientation. For example, maybe you know that you won't be available to volunteer in the winter time or maybe you're a teacher and you would like to only volunteer in the summer.

### **What if something comes up and I am unable to volunteer for an extended period of time?**

You have the right to pause your involvement in the SMP volunteer program at any time. To do this, please reach out to your host agency supervisor. If you wish to later resume your involvement or decide to no longer volunteer, please contact the volunteer supervisor at your host site.

### **What is the "Volunteer Review & Annual Check-in?"**

The Illinois SMP Volunteer Review and Annual Check-In is a conversation (in person or over the phone) between you, and your host agency supervisor that will take place once a year. The first goal of the review and check-in is to get volunteer feedback about the volunteer program in order to learn how your experience can be improved and to keep your supervisor connected with your needs as a volunteer. The second goal is to provide you, the volunteer, with feedback that will help your work with SMP and also to recognize your achievements and strengths.

### **Does SMP provide liability and accident insurance to their volunteers?**

Your SMP may provide liability and accident insurance for volunteers who are engaged in SMP business. You should discuss this with your host agency supervisor. Refer to page the Insurance section on page 33, for more information.

### **Do I need to have my driver's license?**

SMP volunteers are not required to drive or own a vehicle.

If travel involves driving, the Illinois SMP Program must have current copies of volunteers' driver's licenses and vehicle insurance cards on file. If you accept a volunteer role that involves driving

your own vehicle, you will need to sign a certification of automobile insurance coverage. Please see pages 33 and 34 for more information.

**Does SMP provide travel reimbursements to their volunteers?**

Your SMP may possibly provide travel reimbursement for volunteers. Please reach out to your host agency supervisor to see their organization’s reimbursement policy. For more information on traveling as a volunteer, refer to page 34.

**How is the safety of outreach sites ensured?**

When an outreach event is scheduled, the “Safety Checklist for Venue Sites” is completed.

Volunteers may be involved in conducting the safety check. Please speak with your host agency supervisor. You can find the “Safety Checklist for Venue Sites” in Appendix E on page 47.

**What is SIRS?**

The Illinois SMP Program uses SIRS (SMP Information Reporting System) to track activity and report activity related to outreach and education and individual interactions. Please discuss whether you will be using SIRS with your host agency supervisor. Refer to page 41 for more information.

**What is the full SMP volunteer screening process?**

You can find our SMP screening process in Appendix A on page 40.

**If someone I know is interested in volunteering with SMP, who should I contact?**

If you know someone who would like to become a volunteer with SMP, you can have them reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator to apply. Word-of-mouth is extremely helpful to us! The more volunteers we have, the more we can expand our SMP outreach and achieve our SMP mission. We are extremely grateful for any referrals you make.



## Volunteer Roles

The Illinois SMP program operates with two volunteer roles. The two standard roles are described below. Your Volunteer Coordinator will give you a copy of a position description that describes the purpose, duties, and qualifications for the role(s) in which you have agreed to serve.

Volunteers will complete the required online training and shadow their host agency contact to make sure they are comfortable performing their volunteer duties.

### *Illinois SMP Volunteer Roles*

#### **Community Educator:**

Duties can include:

- Staffing an exhibit at an event such as a health fair and providing general information about SMP to the public and answer basic questions.
- Giving substantive presentations on SMP topics to small and large groups, with the opportunity for interaction with the audience during time set aside for Q & A and discussion. Training and presentation materials provided.

#### **Community Advocate:**

Duties can include:

- Direct discussions with beneficiaries, caregivers, and/or family members about their individual situations and may include reviewing personal information such as Medicare Summary Notices, billing statements, and other related financial and health documents.
- Administrative support such as copying, filing, data entry, and placing outbound phone calls in support of SMP activity.
- Transporting and disseminating SMP information materials to sites and events.

## Orientation and Training

Orientation and training are essential to developing the knowledge and skills that the volunteer needs to serve the people of their community effectively.

### *Orientation*

Orientation takes place shortly after the SMP accepts a volunteer into service. Its aim is to explain, among other topics, the:

- Purpose and values of the SMP program.
- Nature and operation of the program or activity in which the volunteer will participate.
- Purpose, duties, and requirements of the role the volunteer is accepting.

### *Training Programs*

The SMP has established minimum training requirements and programs for the various volunteer roles. Volunteers must complete the training required for their roles and demonstrate through testing that they have attained minimum levels of comprehension and skill, before participating in volunteer activities.

The SMP Resource Center makes these training programs available in TRAX: Training Tracker, the training tracking system for SMPs, by logging into the SMP Resource Center's website: [www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org).

**SMP Foundations Training:** This training provides a foundation of knowledge in three main content areas: the SMP program, Medicare basics, and Medicare fraud and abuse.

**SMP Group Education Training:** This training provides the necessary skills and resources to present SMP group education sessions consistently to groups of Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers, and other applicable groups across the country.

**SMP Counselor Training:** This training provides the necessary skills and resources to answer basic SMP questions and provide individual SMP education consistently across the country. (Required for Advocate volunteers only.)

**SIRS Training:** This training provides SMP staff and volunteers who are assigned to use the SMP Information and Reporting System (SIRS) the necessary skills and resources to enter and review data in SIRS related to team members, outreach activities, and complex interactions.

## **Additional Trainings:**

**Complex Interactions Training:** This training provides the necessary skills for handling complex interactions, and, when necessary, conducting referrals to the appropriate entity.

In addition to the formal training programs for the various SMP volunteer roles, volunteers may receive on-the-job training through coaching and feedback of a supervisor. “Community Educator” volunteers will be able to shadow a SMP presentation and a SMP table outreach event, before having to do any events solo.

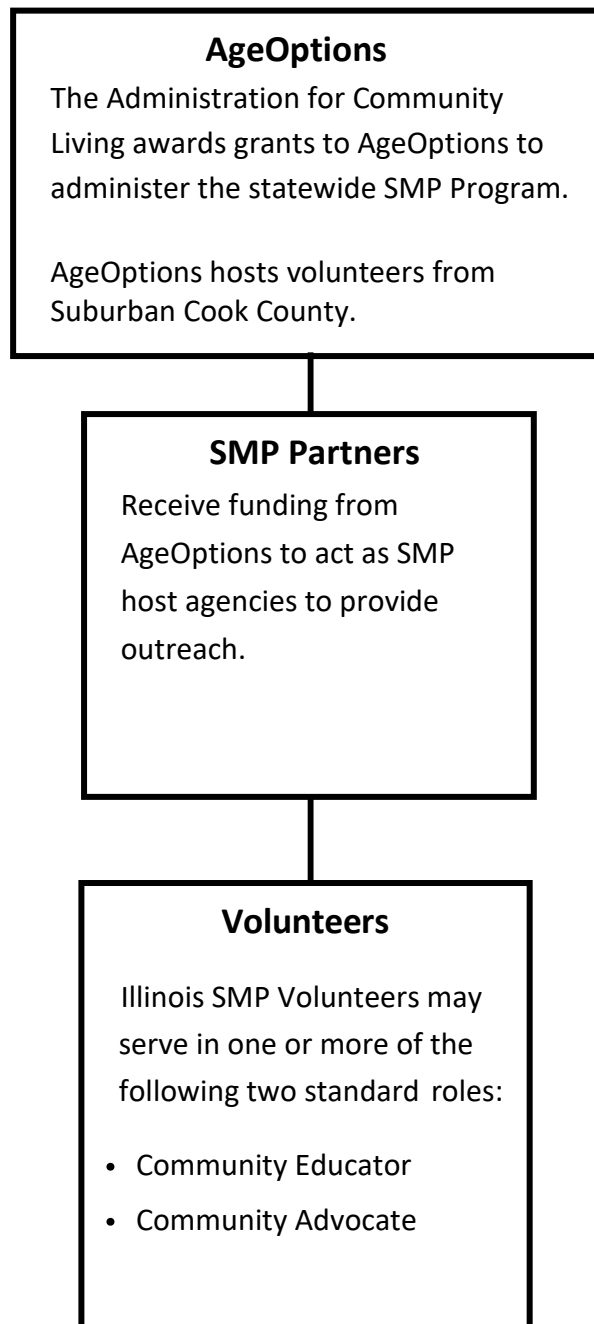
## Recognition

The SMP program greatly appreciates the many and varied contributions of its volunteers to the program's success. Host agency supervisors recognize and reward volunteer service both formally and informally. Recognition may take the form of feedback on the results of a volunteer's work, feedback during the volunteer review and annual check-in, a thank you note, a birthday card or a mention in our 6-month report in ACL.

Volunteers will also be featured regularly in our biweekly fraud alerts and will be recognized for their outstanding work by AgeOptions.

The SMP program strives to recognize volunteers for all types of productive service, and not simply for the number of hours they work. We encourage you to identify and nominate other volunteers who may deserve special recognition.

## Illinois SMP Organizational Structure



## Illinois SMP Main Office Location and Staff Contacts

### The Illinois SMP Program, administered by:

#### AgeOptions

1048 Lake Street  
Suite 300  
Oak Park, IL 60301

**Phone:** (708) 383-0258

**Toll-free Phone:** (800) 699-9043

**Fax:** (708) 524-0870

### SMP Staff at AgeOptions:

**Travis Trumitch**, Director, Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol

Oversees all aspects of Illinois SMP operations.

Email: [travis.trumitch@ageoptions.org](mailto:travis.trumitch@ageoptions.org)

**Marina Silva**, SMP Outreach Specialist

Educates beneficiaries on how to prevent, detect, and report Medicare Fraud. Is responsible for all aspects of the SMP Hotline.

Email: [marina.silva@ageoptions.org](mailto:marina.silva@ageoptions.org)

**Jesus Enriquez**, Spanish SMP Outreach Specialist

Educates beneficiaries on how to prevent, detect, and report Medicare Fraud. Focuses on Spanish outreach across the state of Illinois.

Email: [jesus.enriquez@ageoptions.org](mailto:jesus.enriquez@ageoptions.org)

**Ally Cassity**, SMP Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer program facilitator & manages SMP volunteers.

Email: [allyson.cassity@ageoptions.org](mailto:allyson.cassity@ageoptions.org)

## Illinois SMP Program Partner Agencies

**AgeGuide** – Lombard, IL

Phone: (630) 293-5990

**AgeLinc** – Springfield, IL

Phone: (217) 787-9234

**AgeSmart** – O’Fallon, IL

Phone: (618) 222-2561

**Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging** –  
Peoria, IL

Phone: (309) 340-4877

**Chicago Department of Family and Support  
Services/White Crane Wellness Center** –  
Chicago, IL

Phone: (312) 743-0300

**Coalition for Limited English Speaking Elderly  
(CLESE)** – Chicago, IL

Phone: (312) 461-0812

**East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging** –  
Bloomington, IL

Phone: (309) 829-2065

**Egyptian Area Agency on Aging** – Carterville, IL

Phone: (618) 985-8311

**Midland Area Agency on Aging** – Centralia, IL

Phone: (618) 532-1853

**Northwestern Illinois Area on Aging** –  
Rockford, IL

Phone: (815) 226-4901

**Southeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging** –  
Mount Carmel, IL

Phone: (217) 262-0678

**West Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging** –  
Quincy, IL

Phone: (217) 223-7904

**Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging** –  
Rock Island, IL

Phone: (309) 793-6800

# Part Three

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## Policies & Procedures





## Rights and Responsibilities

SMP program volunteers have certain rights and responsibilities that are good to keep in mind during the course of your volunteer service. Because the program's leadership sees volunteers as a valuable resource to the program and the communities they serve, volunteers have rights, for example, to meaningful work, support, and recognition for the work they do.

At the same time, the SMP program expects volunteers to perform their duties to the best of their abilities, to comply with the program's volunteer policies, and to remain loyal to the program's values, goals, and procedures. Volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the SMP program and agree that the SMP may decide to end a volunteer's relationship with the SMP or to change the nature of the volunteer's assignment when appropriate.

### **As an SMP volunteer, you have a right to:**

- Receive meaningful work assignments.
- Treatment as an equal co-worker.
- A safe work environment.
- Request reasonable modifications or adjustments to accommodate your disability
- A respectful work environment free of harassment.
- Receive orientation and training.
- Receive effective supervision.
- Receive constructive feedback on a regular basis.
- Receive informal and formal recognition.
- Receive clear information about the boundaries for the work you are to do and not to do (see the position description for your volunteer role).
- Receive all the pertinent information you need to perform your work assignments.
- Refuse any tasks or work assignments, especially when the assignment requires you to do something for which you have not been trained.
- Security and confidentiality for the records in your personnel file.
- Examine the contents of your personnel file.
- Make complaints and file grievances.
- Resign from your volunteer service at any time.

**As an SMP volunteer, you have a responsibility to:**

- Provide SMP services responsibly and objectively, without regard to the background or characteristics of the beneficiaries or clients or with favoritism to specific services, providers, or products.
- Represent the SMP program only to the extent that your position description and role specifically authorize, and not to present yourself as a spokesperson for the SMP program in a formal sense.
- Use your affiliation only in the interests of the SMP program, and not to promote religious or political beliefs or personal business dealings.
- Inform your supervisor of any conflicts of interest that may arise after placement in your volunteer position.
- Report any abuse that you may witness involving the program's beneficiaries or clients.
- Report incidents such as accidents, injuries, errors, and the like to your supervisor.
- Report on your volunteer activities on a timely basis.
- Protect the confidentiality of the program's beneficiaries and/or clients.
- Follow procedures to ensure the security of clients' electronic and hard copy data.
- Report changes in your health status or medical treatment that might adversely affect your performance to your supervisor.
- Notify your supervisor of absences that will prevent you from performing an assigned task.
- Complete required training programs, including continuing education programs.

The list above shows many, but not all, of the rights and responsibilities for SMP program volunteers. For the specific policy language on these and other rights and responsibilities, see the volunteer rights and responsibilities in the Appendix.

Here are some examples that we hope will help clarify some of these responsibilities:

**Representing the SMP** Volunteers who are trained to make group presentations are authorized to discuss, and answer questions about, approved SMP education programs. In that limited capacity, they are free to identify themselves as being affiliated with the SMP. They should not, however, hold themselves out as public spokespersons for the program in connection with media inquiries or questions related to official policy positions.

As a representative of the SMP, you are expected to maintain professional standards in all things, including appearance, use of appropriate language, and conduct.

**Reporting Conflicts of Interest** One concern for SMP program managers is the appearance of an implied endorsement for a volunteer who is known to the community for their business and/or political interests. After discussing the circumstances with a volunteer, a program manager may decide that a person who is engaged in health care sales, or who is running for a seat on the city council, is unsuited for making SMP group presentations because of the danger of blurring the lines between the person's volunteer activity and their business or personal interest. Please bring any business, political, or personal activity that arises, that may conflict with the mission and goals of the SMP program, to your supervisor's attention.

**Reporting Incidents** If you are involved in an accident, suffer an injury, experience harassment, or witness abuse of a beneficiary while you are on duty as an SMP volunteer, you have a responsibility to report the incident to your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. Complete and submit an incident reporting form (see Appendix) as soon as possible.

**Volunteers Who Drive** If your volunteer position involves driving a motor vehicle on behalf of the SMP program, you have additional responsibilities to:

- Abide by traffic laws, such as speed limit, seat belt, and cell phone laws, as you carry out your volunteer duties.
- Carry liability insurance on your vehicle.
- Notify your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator if your insurance coverage lapses.
- Notify your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator if your driver's license expires or receives restrictions that limit your ability to carry out your volunteer duties.
- Record and report mileage for reimbursement (if applicable). For more information, see the Insurance section of this document on page 33.

### *Probationary Period*

Policy: 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 the SMP is not appropriate, termination can be immediate and without prior notice or reason provided by either party. Probationary status also applies to volunteers who have been reassigned to new roles with the SMP.

## Volunteers with Disabilities

The SMP program values the service of volunteers with disabilities. SMP leadership strives to include volunteers with disabilities in all facets of the program to the extent that an individual's physical capacity allows, and to ensure access to all SMP program facilities. When requested, the program will make reasonable accommodations to meet the special needs of volunteers with disabilities.

## Volunteer Risk and Program Management Policies

- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has comprehensive Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) policies, which provide guidance and direction to staff and volunteers. The overall purpose of the VRPM policies is to decrease and manage risks related to volunteer involvement in individuals and increase the management and coordination of volunteer efforts, thereby enhancing the reach and effectiveness of individuals across the country. As a result, programs will be safer for both volunteers and beneficiaries and liability exposure will decrease among agencies.
- As an SMP volunteer, you have an obligation to know and understand the policies and how they affect you. Your supervisor and other SMP staff will refer to the policies as they manage you and the other volunteers in the program. The policies address:
  - Definitions of key terms.
  - Volunteer role classifications and position descriptions.
  - Risk management and insurance requirements.
  - Incident reporting and response procedures.
  - Volunteer rights and responsibilities.
  - Coordinator of volunteers' role.
  - Screening procedures.
  - Orientation and training.
  - Performance management.
  - Boundaries and ethics, including relationships with beneficiaries.
  - Confidentiality.
  - Grievances and complaints.
  - Recognition.
  - Information and data security.

This handbook contains information, below, on some of the policies that most interest volunteers such as roles, rights and responsibilities, orientation and training, screening, dismissal, and complaints and grievances. If you would like to see the complete set of VRPM policies, ask your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

One thing to keep in mind is that the volunteer risk and program management policies apply to all state and local organizations, also called “host agencies,” that recruit and retain volunteers to perform SMP duties, and to all the SMP volunteers who work under them. In some cases, host organizations may have volunteer policies in place in addition to the VRPM policies. If you find that the different policies are in conflict or are causing confusion, please discuss the problem with your supervisor and/or the Volunteer Coordinator.

## Background Checks

Background checks are required for all SMP volunteers. These will be conducted after you have completed your phone interview and before you start your online trainings. Your volunteer coordinator will provide you with details on how to get your background check completed. All background checks are done at no cost to the volunteer.

### **Reconfirming Background Checks:**

The SMP has a policy on how often various background checks will be repeated. Criminal record background checks will be conducted every five years for position of trust volunteer roles. For volunteers who drive, driving record background checks will be conducted every five years as well.

## Compliance

Volunteers are made aware of all volunteer policies through a range of mechanisms including, but not necessarily limited to, various parts of the volunteer screening process; volunteer orientation; volunteer training; the volunteer handbook; volunteer in-service sessions; notices, memos, and bulletins about existing policies; and supervisory and performance evaluation sessions.

Since all policies have been shared with volunteers through this handbook, it is expected that you know these policies and operate in alignment with them. If you do not fully understand a policy, please reach out to your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

SMP volunteers are expected to conduct their work with a view of the larger picture of what is in the best interests of the majority of SMP beneficiaries, the integrity of SMP programming, and the long-term reputation and sustainability of the SMP itself.

Compliance with all SMP volunteer policies is a minimum expectation of SMP volunteers. Failure to comply will result in a graduated response to assist the volunteer to return to functioning inside the rules. If reasonable efforts from SMP prove unsuccessful, further disciplinary action is taken, up to and including dismissal.

Please work with your supervisor or volunteer coordinator if you have any questions about the Illinois SMP policies and procedures.



## Confidentiality

SMP Volunteers should never write down or take beneficiary's personal information with them from a venue site. Instead, volunteers should instruct beneficiaries to call the Illinois SMP office at (800) 699-9043.

## Insurance

Your SMP may provide liability and accident insurance for volunteers who are engaged in SMP business. You should discuss this with your host agency supervisor and determine how the coverage coordinates with your other insurance plans. SMP volunteers who drive their own vehicles for SMP business are to carry automobile liability insurance policies at their own expense. In the event of an accident or damage while a volunteer is driving her or his own vehicle for SMP work, the volunteer's own automobile insurance coverage comes into play. We encourage you to consult your own insurance agent about your SMP driving activities and to make sure that your coverage provides adequate protection.

### **Vehicle Insurance:**

If you accept a volunteer role that involves driving your own vehicle, you will need to sign a certification of automobile insurance coverage. The signed certification is retained in your personnel file. Your supervisor will verify that the coverage remains in effect at least annually. If your automobile insurance coverage lapses, please notify your supervisor immediately so that she or he can adjust work assignments as needed.

**See Appendix C on page 42, for Incident Report Form in case of accident.**

## Volunteer Roles that Require Travel

SMP volunteers are not required to drive or own a vehicle. However, if the agreed upon volunteer duties require travel, please check with your supervisor on if they can provide you travel reimbursement.

### Volunteers Who Drive:

If your volunteer position involves driving a motor vehicle on behalf of the SMP program, you have additional responsibilities to:

- Abide by traffic laws, such as speed limit, seat belt, and cell phone laws, as you carry out your volunteer duties.
- Carry liability insurance on your vehicle (see page 34).
- Notify your supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator if your insurance coverage lapses.
- Notify your supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator if your driver's license expires or receives restrictions that limit your ability to carry out your volunteer duties.
- Record and report mileage for reimbursement (if applicable).

(Please refer to Appendix D on page 44 to review SMP's driver safety guidelines.

Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work. Specific information regarding such protection is available from your host agency supervisor.

It is the volunteer's own automobile insurance coverage that comes into play in the event of an accident or damage while a volunteer is driving their own car for SMP work. Volunteers are advised to notify their own automobile insurance provider about their SMP driving activities and ensure coverage is in place and provides adequate protection.

**Please note: The Illinois SMP Program requires copies of your driver's license and vehicle insurance if you will be driving as part of your SMP duties.**

## Illinois SMP Volunteer Venue Site Safety

The Illinois SMP program checks the safety of our outreach sites. When we schedule the outreach event, the “Safety Checklist for Venue Sites” is completed. Volunteers may be involved in conducting the safety check. Please speak with your local SMP Coordinator and/or host agency supervisor to find out when/how to conduct a safety check.

- **Home visits by SMP volunteers to a beneficiary’s residence are always prohibited.** Please remember that in a senior building, a resident’s room is their home. SMP Volunteers should never visit a beneficiary’s home or room. Volunteers should only conduct SMP duties in the meeting spaces originally booked as the official venue site.

The Safety Checklist for Venue Sites names a responsible party that must be available to the SMP Volunteer for the duration of the event. A volunteer should always be given the name and contact information for the venue’s responsible party prior to arriving at the site.

**Note to volunteers:** If you have any serious safety concerns about the venue that the onsite staff cannot address to your satisfaction, pause to consider whether the event should go forward. If necessary, contact your supervisor or contact person to discuss the problem. If you cannot reach your SMP contact and your safety concerns are substantial - that is, you believe there is a reasonable risk of injury or harm to yourself or event participants - you are authorized to cancel the presentation. Offer apologies to participants as they arrive. Give a brief explanation for the cancellation without accusing or offending the venue’s owners or staff. Give participants contact information to the Illinois SMP office to inquire about a different presentation opportunity in their area.

## Performance Management

The SMP program's success is measured in terms of outcomes related to public education about fraud, errors, and abuse in Medicare, and to assisting individual beneficiaries in identifying and reporting instances of suspected health care fraud, errors, and abuse. A key expectation in SMP volunteer program management is that program leadership will provide the support volunteers need to successfully achieve the program's education and assistance goals. A constructive and success-oriented performance management system is in place to guide supervisors as they work to encourage productive and satisfying volunteer involvement in the SMP program.

### **SMP Performance Management System:**

The performance management system has three components: supervision, performance evaluation, and progressive corrective action. Each component includes a range of techniques that supervisors can use to Support volunteers and their performance. The guiding principle of performance management is to access the appropriate amount of supervisory intervention for each volunteer depending on their responsibilities and capacity. It provides several avenues to demonstrate support and to acknowledge excellence. Here are some key points about the system's three components:

- **Supervision** The SMP has an obligation to provide supervision and support for the program's volunteers. This means that supervisors have a responsibility to manage the work that volunteers do, and to determine the kind of guidance and support that each volunteer needs. The supervision that you receive as an SMP volunteer should reflect the principle of positive, constructive, and success-oriented guidance that underpins the SMP volunteer performance management system. You should expect to receive feedback, consultation, information, and meaningful assignments from your supervisor.
- **Performance Evaluation** Volunteers will meet annually with their supervisors to evaluate their work. This is a more formal process called the "Volunteer Review and Annual Check-in," and will be more in depth than one finds in a supervisor's day-to-day feedback. It will provide a more detailed assessment of each volunteer's performance, on-the-job behavior, achievements, and areas for improvement. This process gives you and your supervisor an opportunity to exchange feedback, ideas, and suggestions. Your supervisor will also use the performance evaluation process to update your personnel file, including changes in your volunteer role, contact information, and the like. They will document the substance of the performance evaluation and any improvement plans to which you mutually agree and place them in your file. This is also an opportunity for you as the volunteer to share what you need to succeed.

- **Progressive Corrective Action** SMP program managers may take corrective action when a volunteer's behavior is serious enough to require intervention, and when its continuation or repetition is unacceptable. The corrective action process is progressive in that it is oriented toward success rather than focused on failure, and that the degree of intervention matches the nature of the performance or behavior issue, becoming more serious as the unacceptability of the behavior increases or the volunteer's inability to resolve the problem continues.

Corrective action in the SMP program includes a range of interventions that aim to help volunteers make needed improvements when their performance and/or behavior do not meet expectations. Interventions may include additional training, coaching, adjustment of volunteer duties, or reassignment to a different role. In more serious cases, interventions may involve formal disciplinary actions such as warnings, suspensions, and dismissal. If you would like to learn more about the progressive corrective action process, ask your supervisor for the program's progressive corrective action procedure.

For information on dismissals, see the Volunteer Separation section of this document.

#### **Grievances and Appeals:**

A volunteer who has a complaint about, or grievance with, staff, other volunteers, beneficiaries, or partner organizations should communicate the concern to their supervisor. If the complaint or grievance involves the volunteer's own supervisor, they should convey the concern to the next person in your host agency's chain of command. If still no resolution, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

The SMP also has an appeals procedure through which a volunteer can request review of a formal corrective action decision, including dismissal. If you have a complaint or grievance, ask your supervisor for information on filing it.

## Volunteer Separation

**Resignation** Volunteers may resign voluntarily from their service with the SMP program at any time. If you intend to resign, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

**Discipline & Dismissal** The SMP accepts volunteers with the understanding that the volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the SMP. Volunteers who do not follow the rules, policies, and procedures of the SMP program, or who repeatedly fail to perform an assignment satisfactorily despite supervisory support and appropriate interventions, are subject to disciplinary action or dismissal. Involuntary dismissal is typically a last resort, used only when other appropriate steps have been taken. Ideally, the supervisory staff will discuss with a volunteer in advance the reasons for a possible dismissal if other corrective actions do not resolve the problem within a reasonable time frame.

Possible Grounds for Dismissal:

- Gross misconduct.
- Serious misjudgment that may undermine trust in the volunteer, cause harm to others, or diminish public trust in the program.
- Insubordination, including failure or unwillingness to perform essential responsibilities in the volunteer's role or to accept direction from authorized supervisory personnel.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on volunteer duty or representing the SMP.
- Dishonesty, theft, or other illegal acts.
- Loss of a license (such as a driver's license), certification or qualification required to perform assigned duties.
- Unauthorized use or misuse of SMP equipment or materials.
- Harm, abuse, or mistreatment of beneficiaries, co-workers, or other persons.
- Sexual harassment.
- Serious and repeated failure to abide by SMP policies and procedures.
- Failure to meet physical, cognitive, or emotional standards of performance.
- Repeated failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.
- Irresolvable conflict of interest.
- Serious breach of boundaries.

(The list illustrates the range of reasons for dismissal and is not intended to be comprehensive.)

**Immediate Dismissal and Suspension** Some behaviors are so unacceptable that, upon verification, they constitute grounds for immediate dismissal. If a question exists about the unacceptable behavior, the SMP will temporarily suspend the volunteer from service pending the results of an investigation.

Possible Grounds for Immediate Dismissal:

- Fraud, theft, or abuse in connection with SMP volunteer service.
- Serious illegal act.
- Gross negligence causing bodily harm in connection with SMP volunteer service.
- Breach of confidentiality.
- Reporting for volunteer service in an impaired condition resulting from the use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Using violence in the workplace.

(This list is for illustration purposes and is not intended to be complete or comprehensive.)

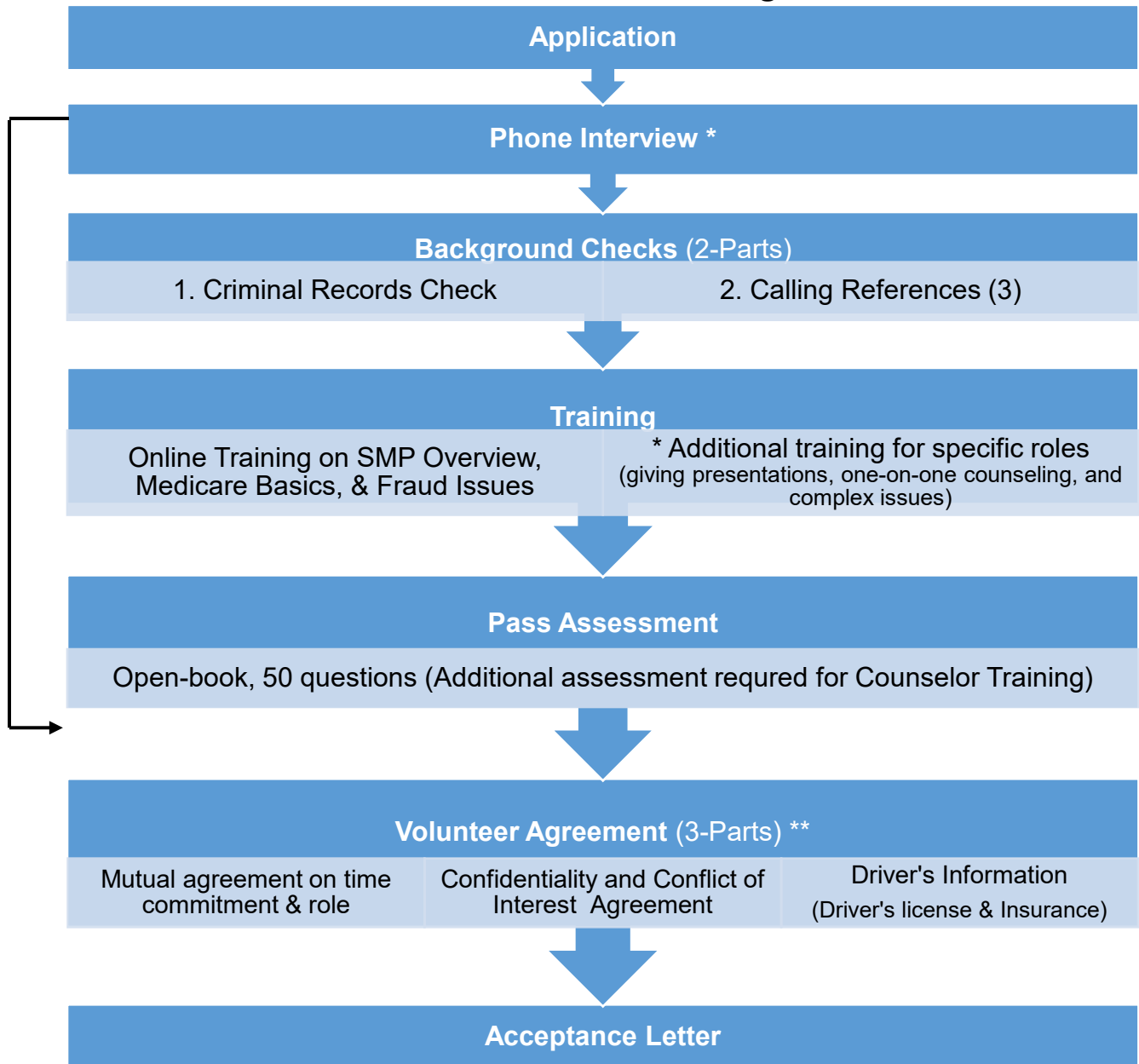
## Exit Interview

**Some SMP programs conduct exit interviews with outgoing volunteers. If your program conducts exit interviews, please participate, and answer the questions candidly. Your responses will help the Volunteer Coordinator identify the SMP volunteer program's strengths and weaknesses, and to make improvements where needed. We encourage your participation.**



## Appendix A

### Illinois SMP Volunteer Screening Process



\* Volunteers with roles that will have no client contact or access to sensitive information will complete the application and phone interview and then skip to the Volunteer Agreement. If their role ever changes, they will need to complete the other screening steps.

\*\* All SMP Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Agreement.

## Appendix B

### Illinois SMP Reporting

The Illinois SMP Program uses SIRS (SMP Information Reporting System) to track activity and report activity related to outreach and education and individual interactions.

Volunteers may use SIRS to enter in their activities. However, volunteers should refrain from including any personal information in the reports they submit to SIRS. Please discuss how to report your activities, including your use of SIRS, with your host agency supervisor.

## Appendix C

### Illinois SMP Incident Reporting Form

**Please use this form to report any incident involving an SMP volunteer, including:**

- Injury to the volunteer, client, or program participant.
- Accidents, including motor vehicle accidents.
- Property damage, including damage to equipment.
- Lost possessions, files, or equipment.
- Abuse of a beneficiary or other individual.
- Harassment and offensive remarks.
- Error in judgment.

**Fax or mail completed form to:** SMP Volunteer Coordinator, AgeOptions 1048 Lake Street, Suite 300, Oak Park, IL 60301-1102 Fax number: (708) 524-0870.

Please also inform your host agency supervisor of the incident, you may have to file an incident report with them as well.

#### Information on the Affected Person or Organization

Check one:  Volunteer  Beneficiary/Client  Program Participant  Paid Staff

Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Affected party's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Information on the SMP Volunteer (if not the affected party)

Volunteer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Information about the Incident

Check all that apply:  Injury  Accident  Property Damage  Lost Possession

Abuse  Offensive Remark  Harassment  Error  Other (please describe)

Date of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of the incident:

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe what happened, how it happened, factors leading up to the incident, what was said or observed. Please give as much detail as possible. (Attach separate sheet, if necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If there were witnesses, list their names/contact information (include yourself if you were the witness):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Complete the following (if applicable):**

Name of physician consulted (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of hospital or clinic (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Was incident reported to the police?  Yes  No

Police name and contact number (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**Illinois SMP Supervisor or Coordinator Information (Person Filing this Incident Report)**

Agency/Organization name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For questions when using this form please contact the SMP Volunteer Coordinator at AgeOptions, (800) 699-9043.

## Appendix D

### Illinois SMP Program Volunteer Driver Safety Guidelines

Volunteers for the Illinois SMP Program provide their own transportation to complete their duties. This may involve driving their own vehicle. The Illinois SMP encourages its volunteers to always practice safe driving. The following are safe driving tips to consider (these are recommendations):

- Make sure you are legally entitled to drive the vehicle you are using.
- Make sure you are using a vehicle that is safe and road legal.
- Always have a current and valid driver's license.
- Always have current and valid vehicle insurance.
- Make sure you are fit to drive at all times behind the wheel.
- Do not drive when affected by alcohol, drugs or medicines.
- Do not drive when affected by illness.
- Do not drive when you are too tired to do so safely.

#### Planning Ahead

It is important to plan your route before every journey. Planning in advance helps prevent unforeseen and risky circumstances, and you will be better prepared to deal with them if they do.

#### Give Yourself Time

Plan your journey to allow sufficient time to complete it at safe speeds and without needing to exceed speed limits. Take into account foreseeable weather and traffic conditions.

#### Poor Driving Conditions

Avoid driving in poor conditions and check the weather forecast before you set off, especially if there has been recent bad weather. If the reported advice is to only make essential journeys, please follow that advice and cancel your trip. (Please see the official Illinois SMP Severe Weather and Disaster Safety Policy in Appendix G for more information.)

#### Drugs

Do not drive if you have taken any illegal drugs. They can affect your decision-making and driving skills, as well as your physical and mental condition and behavior.

## **Medicines**

Check with your general practitioner or pharmacist whether any over-the-counter or prescribed medicines you are taking are likely to affect your driving (for example, by causing drowsiness). If so, ask for an alternative medicine that does not cause side effects that could impair your driving, or avoid driving altogether while on medication.

## **Illness**

Illness can also affect our ability to drive. We can often be tempted to “soldier” on, when in fact it would be safer not to drive until we are feeling better.

## **Fatigue**

Consider whether you are likely to be drowsy or sleepy while driving. Tired drivers are more likely to crash, especially on long monotonous journeys, and in the early hours of the morning. If you are driving as a volunteer in the evening after a full day’s work in your normal job, you may also be more tired. Discuss any problems with your host agency supervisor.

## **Speed Limits**

Make sure you know the speed limit of the roads you are using. Always stay within speed limits (including variable limits and temporary limits at roadwork sites) even if you think the limit is too low. Speed limits set the maximum speed for that road. However, please note there are some circumstances like driving around schools, driving on narrow roads, and driving when visibility is restricted just to name a few, when it is safer to drive at a speed less than the posted limit.

## **Distractions**

Driving requires your full concentration all of the time. Trying to do something else while driving will distract you as well as slow your reactions and increase the risk of crashing.

- **Mobile Phones**

A substantial body of research shows that using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction, and substantially increases the risk of the driver crashing.

- **Eating, Drinking, Smoking, Tuning the Radio**

Many other things that might seem simple and innocent can be distracting when driving. Fatal crashes can, and do, occur because a driver chose to unwrap food, take a drink, or light a cigarette while driving. Safe driving needs concentration; avoid unnecessary distractions.

## Safe Vehicle

Before driving any vehicle, check to see:

- Tires are undamaged (no cuts or bulges), are at the correct pressure and have enough tread depth.
- If there are any signs of vehicle damage.
- If oil, coolant, and window wash levels are correct.
- The brakes are working.
- The lights and indicators are working.
- The windows are not damaged.
- The wipers are working.
- The mirrors are correctly positioned and not cracked or broken.
- All occupants are using their seat belts and head restraints are adjusted correctly.
- All loads are securely restrained.

If in any doubt how to check any of the above, read your vehicle's handbook and/or ask someone to show you.

In your vehicle, keep copies of:

- The emergency procedures in your vehicle manual
- A copy of your current vehicle insurance
- A spare tire and tire replacement tools and jack
- A warm blanket
- A flashlight and flares
- Small roadside cones and reflectors
- Drinking water

Please refer to page 35 of this handbook for more information about volunteers who drive.

Adapted in part from The Auto Club Group and Minnesota Safety Council 2010 Get There!: Your Guide to Traffic Safety <https://chicago.aaa.com/assets/pdfs/get-there-your-guide-to-traffic-safety.pdf> and The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA.com).

## Appendix E

### Illinois SMP Safety Checklist for Venue Sites

When scheduling a presentation, the SMP staff/volunteer who books the event should ask the following questions that pertain to the safety of both the SMP volunteer(s) and audience members at the presentation. The volunteer presenter should be informed of any safety issues. When the volunteer arrives at the venue, they should quickly assess the facilities. Any health and safety issues should be raised with the venue representative if possible. If a concern still exists, the volunteer should call the SMP Coordinator or agency point of contact for direction.

**Volunteer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presentation Site:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date & Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Estimated Number of People:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Host Supervisor/Point of Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*This person must be someone who can be easily contacted at the time of the event in case of emergency, whether that is the SMP Volunteer Coordinator or someone else they designate at their agency.

Responsible Party at Venue Site (Required)		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Will a responsible party at the venue (e.g. staff or group leader) meet the volunteer and deal with any safety issues that may arise during the event, meaning that they will be at the event or accessible in case of emergency?
The volunteer presenter must have the responsible party's contact information:  Responsible Party's Name: _____ Responsible Party's Phone: _____		

**PLEASE NOTE:** A staff member or responsible party at the venue must be available during the presentation in case the volunteer encounters any emergency situation. If the venue cannot guarantee that a responsible party will be on site, **do not schedule the presentation.**

**Volunteers, if no responsible party is available on the day of the event, call your host agency supervisor immediately.**



<b>Information for Volunteer Presenter</b>
Is there anything our volunteer should know about directions, parking or how to find your building entrance? Please describe: _____
If there are any safety issues related to the presence of older adults at the venue that we or our volunteer presenter should know about, please describe: _____
Is the venue accessible to persons with physical disabilities or limited mobility? Please describe any relevant information we or our volunteer presenter should know: _____
If this event is taking place in the evening, are the front of the building, the streets and parking lot well-lit at night? _____
Is there anything else our volunteer should know (e.g., room setup, A/V technology, etc.)? _____

#### Volunteer Checklist for Day of Event:

- Ask the responsible party if they will be in the room. If not, where will they be?
- Is the room easy to find? If not, can you ask the responsible party for signs?
- If an extension cord or wires are needed for AV equipment, can they be taped down or placed to avoid where participants will walk? Ask the responsible party for help.
- Do the tables or chairs in the room seem sturdy? If there are any concerns, tell the responsible party.
- Are entrances and exits well-lit, easy to see, and unblocked?
- In case of emergency, are the emergency exits marked and uncluttered?
- After the event, scan the room to see if participants left any personal belongings or documents. If so, be sure to leave these with the responsible party before leaving.
- During the event, remember to ensure all participants can easily understand (see or hear) you. Always use a microphone if available. Encourage people to move closer.

#### Please Remember:

- Volunteers have the right to cancel a presentation if they have any serious safety concerns about the venue that the onsite staff/responsible party cannot address. Volunteers should contact their host agency supervisor/contact person to discuss the problem.
- Home visits by SMP volunteers to a beneficiary's residence are prohibited. SMP Volunteers should never visit a beneficiary's home or room. Volunteers should only conduct SMP duties in the meeting spaces originally booked as the official venue site.
- SMP Volunteers should never write down or take beneficiary's personal information with them from a venue site. Instead, beneficiaries should be instructed to call the Illinois SMP office at (800) 699-9043.

## Appendix F

### Illinois SMP Severe Weather and Disaster Safety Policy

If an emergency, disaster, or severe weather occur while an SMP volunteer is performing volunteer work, the following, at a minimum, should be addressed:

- Seek a safe and adequately supplied place of refuge. Seek guidance from on-site staff.
- Call for emergency assistance by dialing 911 from any phone.
- Contact your supervisor if possible. SMP staff and volunteers should share appropriate contact information with each other before starting volunteer duties in case an emergency situation arises.

Severe or inclement weather can make travel (e.g., leaving your home, walking, driving, or taking public transit) extremely dangerous. Examples of severe weather include snow, ice, flooding, strong wind, extreme cold or hot temperatures, and other weather that could make it dangerous to go outside or to travel. Always consider your safety when deciding whether or not to stay home during severe weather. **If there is any doubt, it is best to stay home.** In cases where severe weather makes going outside or travel unsafe, follow these steps:

#### Volunteer Supervisors

- When severe weather is expected, volunteer supervisors should decide if conditions could make it dangerous for volunteers to leave their homes or travel.
- If a supervisor determines early that conditions could be dangerous, they should call any volunteers scheduled to work and cancel their volunteer duties. If a supervisor's office is closed, they should call any volunteers for that day to cancel their work.
  - Supervisors should call any sites at which volunteers are scheduled to work, particularly presentation sites, and cancel for that day. If appropriate, try to reschedule.
  - Please note: Supervisors should always provide their volunteers with contact information for any sites where they would be volunteering, in case you cannot be reached, and the volunteer needs to call the site directly.

#### Volunteers

- Volunteers always have the right to decide that weather would make it unsafe to leave their homes or to travel for their volunteer work. **If you feel unsafe, please stay home.**

- If a volunteer needs to stay home, they should call their supervisors early as possible and speak directly with the supervisor or someone at their office, not voicemail.
  - When severe weather is expected, plan ahead and make a decision early. Whenever possible, if you need to miss an event or presentation, contact your supervisor at least a day before to allow time for your supervisor to reschedule.
- If you are unable to speak directly with your supervisor or someone at their office to cancel your work, volunteers should:
  1. Contact SMP staff at AgeOptions for assistance: (800) 699-9043.
  2. Call the contact at the site where you would have volunteered to inform them that you will not be able to come and that your SMP supervisor will follow-up to reschedule.

Always consider your safety when deciding whether or not to stay home. **If there is any doubt, it is best to stay home.**

**If you have any questions about the policies listed above, please contact the SMP Volunteer Coordinator at AgeOptions (708) 383-0258 or (800) 699-9043.**

## Appendix G

### Illinois SMP Information Technology Policy

To protect our SMP clients, we must ensure that their personal information is kept private and secure. This requires all SMP staff and volunteers to take cautious, proactive measures to do this at all times.

#### Handling and Reporting Sensitive Information to SMP

Volunteers should refrain from collecting and transmitting personal client information via Internet or email. This can include client information (Social Security number, Medicare number, date of birth, driver's license number, financial account numbers, etc.) or names of providers or companies that may be involved in potential fraud or abuse.

If you have sensitive information to communicate with your SMP supervisor, please communicate that information in a phone call.

Any individual who believes they have experienced fraud should be referred to the Illinois SMP hotline at (800) 699-9043. (We prefer beneficiaries make the call to SMP on their own behalf, but if there is a circumstance where the individual cannot easily contact SMP, volunteers may collect client names and phone numbers **only**.) The volunteer may then share the client's name and phone number with SMP staff at AgeOptions, preferably by phone.

To protect client confidentiality, Counseling and Complex Issues and Referrals volunteers who conduct interviews with beneficiaries that involve the discussion of confidential information should have these conversations only in venues that prevent others from overhearing or viewing the information under discussion.

#### Using Computers at Partner Agencies

Illinois SMP volunteers should familiarize themselves with the specific Information Technology protocols at their host agency and follow them. Talk with your supervisor for more information.

Illinois SMP volunteers who perform their duties at host agencies should use only the logins and files assigned to them. Volunteers should only use the Internet for SMP work while performing SMP duties.

Regardless of how diligent volunteers may be, there remains a possibility that data will be compromised. If this occurs, volunteers must immediately notify their SMP supervisor to fill out an Incident Report, which can be found in Appendix C.

### **Using Personal Computers for Outreach**

Illinois SMP volunteers are prohibited from using personal computers during outreach efforts. Presenters should always be prepared to give presentations without the use of technology. If presenters want to use PowerPoint presentations, they should utilize multimedia and technology options offered at venue sites.

### **SIRS**

SMP Information Reporting System (SIRS) is the web based, nationwide data tracking tool used by the SMPs to track and report activity related to outreach and education and individual interactions. Volunteers may use SIRS to enter in their activities. However, volunteers should refrain from including any personal information in the reports they submit to SIRS. Please discuss your use of SIRS with your supervisor.

## Appendix H

### Illinois SMP Volunteer Role Descriptions

Illinois SMP volunteers should only perform the roles assigned in their current SMP Volunteer/Agency Agreement and that they have been fully screened and trained to perform. If you have questions, contact your host agency supervisor.

The following role descriptions can be found on the SMP Volunteer page at <https://www.ageoptions.org/resources/Senior-Medicare-Patrol-SMP/volunteer-with-SMP/>

- Community Educator
- Community Advocate

## Appendix I

### Illinois SMP Volunteer Handbook Verification Form

Please complete this form and email it to:

Allyson.Cassity@ageoptions.org

Attn: SMP Volunteer Coordinator; Ally Cassity

Or mail to:

SMP Volunteer Coordinator

Ally Cassity

AgeOptions

1048 Lake Street

Suite 300

Oak Park, IL 60301-1102

**I hereby certify that I have received the Illinois SMP Volunteer Handbook and have read it in its entirety.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

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Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ACL:** The Administration for Community Living, an operating division within the federal Department of Health and Human Services.
- AAA:** An Area Agency on Aging is responsible for planning and delivery of services under the Older Americans Act for a geographic region within a state. In Illinois, there are 13 AAAs and the SMP program partners with each of them. To locate your local AAA, please visit: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>
- CMS:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) administers the Medicare program and oversees state administration of the Medicaid programs.
- HHS:** The Department of Health & Human Services is one of two departments within the executive branch of the federal government responsible for administering the Health Care Fraud & Abuse Control (HCFAC) program. The Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) are units within HHS.
- DoJ:** The Department of Justice is the other federal department that administers the HCFAC program. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), an agency within the DoJ, works with the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) to investigate health care fraud and apprehend alleged perpetrators. The DoJ’s U.S. Attorney offices throughout the country prosecute criminal health care fraud cases.
- OHIC:** The Office of Healthcare Information and Counseling (OHIC) manages programs and activities designed to empower Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to make informed healthcare decisions. Each program provides community education on Medicare and other associated benefits, as well as one-on-one assistance to those that desire more in-depth support. The SMP, SHIP, and MIPPA programs are all part of OHIC.
- OIG:** The HHS Office of Inspector General investigates Medicare and Medicaid fraud and refers criminal cases for prosecution to the U.S. Attorney offices. The OIG has authority to issue civil monetary penalties and exclude providers from the Medicare and Medicaid programs.
- SHIP:** The State Health Insurance Assistance Programs provide counseling services to Medicare beneficiaries and assist them in applying for assistance programs, comparing, and choosing health and drug plans, and appealing claims denials. In Illinois, this program is sponsored by the Illinois Department on Aging. For more information, visit: <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/ship.html>



**SMP:** The Senior Medicare Patrol programs empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education. The Illinois hotline number is: 1(800)699-9043.

**SIRS:** SMP Information and Reporting System (SIRS) is the nationwide, web-based data collection and reporting system that facilitates reporting of SMP activities.

**STARS:** The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) is the nationwide, web-based data system that facilitates the reporting of SHIP and MIPPA grantees.