

Frequently Asked Question about new Team Member Training

What is the time commitment?

Becoming a CHOICES team member is a significant time commitment. With initial training from beginning to end – it is about 32 plus hours.

What are the training requirements for new team members?

- Complete full application, including a background check
- Interview with the Agency on Aging CHOICES Regional Coordinator
- Attend Orientation (2 hours)
- Complete online modules (12 hours)
- Attend 3 full day training (18 hours)
- Pass an online exam, sign Memorandum of Understanding
- Shadow other Team Members (time depends)

Do I have to attend other trainings?

Yes, to keep certification active, the CHOICES program offers 4 update trainings per year, and you must attend at least two out of the four update trainings (one of which MUST be the October CHOICES counselor update training). Trainings from other partners happen throughout the year are held which may be attended (and recommended).

Do I have to report on my activities?

Yes, you are required to report on everyone you talk to about Medicare. You will receive training on reporting during the training. Failing to report on your activities may result in losing your CHOICES Certification.

Will I be issued a laptop for CHOICES Counseling?

Unfortunately, no, the CHOICES program does not offer equipment as part of this volunteer endeavor. It is our hope the CHOICES host site (the site where you will perform your volunteer activities) can provide the equipment you need. Or you can use your personal laptop if confidentiality is followed.

General Information

Frequently Asked Question about new Team Member Training

1. What is the CHOICES program?

The CHOICES program (Connecticut's State Health Insurance Assistance Program) provides free, unbiased counseling to help Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers understand Medicare and make informed decisions about coverage options.

2. Who can become a CHOICES counselor?

CHOICES counselors include volunteers, and in-kind professionals, who are passionate about assisting Medicare beneficiaries and are willing to complete the required training and certification.

Differences between True Volunteer and In-kind Professionals? If someone can elaborate better on this that would be great... 😊

3. What is the primary role of a CHOICES counselor?

CHOICES counselors provide guidance on Medicare, Medigap, Medicare Advantage plans, Part D (prescription drug coverage), and programs like the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) and Extra Help.

Training and Certification

4. What does the training process involve?

The training includes completing an online course, attending in-person sessions, and passing a certification exam. The course covers Medicare basics, state-specific resources, and client counseling techniques.

5. How long does it take to become certified?

The certification process typically takes between 4–8 weeks, although it may vary.

6. Is there a cost for training materials?

for True Volunteers, the training is free.

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However, for In kind interested individuals, Yes, there is a \$125 fee for training materials, which covers manuals, guides, and other resources.

7. Do I need prior healthcare experience to join?

No prior healthcare experience is required. However, good communication, organizational skills, and a desire to help others are essential.

Commitment and Responsibilities

8. What is the time commitment for CHOICES volunteers?

Volunteers typically dedicate 4–10 hours per week, depending on their availability and the needs of their assigned counseling sites.

9. Can I choose where to provide counseling?

Counselors are often assigned to local senior centers, libraries, or community organizations, but assignments may vary based on availability and program needs.

10. Am I required to meet a minimum number of counseling hours?

no, however, certificate compliance is required to maintain an active status.

Support and Resources

11. What kind of support will I receive as a CHOICES counselor?

Trainees and certified counselors have access to ongoing mentorship, regular updates on Medicare policies, and assistance from program coordinators.

12. What resources are available to help me counsel clients?

Counselors have access to Medicare handbooks, online tools, and direct guidance from Regional Coordinators.

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Additional Information

13. Can I continue to work full-time and still be a CHOICES volunteer?

Yes, full-time professionals, particularly in-kind professionals, can balance their primary work commitments with CHOICES volunteering. Participating in CHOICES not only aligns seamlessly with their existing roles but also enhances their ability to serve clients effectively. The program equips in-kind professionals with specialized knowledge about Medicare, Medicaid, and related programs, allowing them to offer more comprehensive support to the populations they already assist.

14. How does the program ensure client confidentiality?

All CHOICES counselors are trained in confidentiality protocols and must adhere to strict guidelines to protect client information.

15. What happens if I can't continue as a counselor?

If circumstances change, you can discuss your availability with the program coordinator.