# CHOICES Chatter

## June 2018 Newsletter


Looking for meaningful ways to Volunteer? The **CHOICES** Program is a great way to start! **CHOICES**, Connecticut's State Health Insurance Assistance Program, helps older adults and persons with disabilities with **Medicare** to understand their Medicare coverage and healthcare options. By becoming a Volunteer Certified **CHOICES** Counselor, you make a positive difference in the life of a Medicare Beneficiary. Why? The Medicare Program has become extremely complex to navigate, filled with many options available and penalties if rules of enrollment are not followed correctly.

**What are the steps in becoming a Certified CHOICES Counselor?**

First, contact Laura Crews, Director of Benefits Access at Senior Resources Agency on Aging to request a **CHOICES** Application Packet at (860) 887-3561 or via email at LJCrews@SeniorResourcesEC.Org.

The **CHOICES** Application Packet contains information on the program as well as the different roles a volunteer can serve. The application requires a consent to perform background and criminal records check on all volunteers. Once your application is received, a telephone interview and necessary screenings will be completed.

You will be notified of our decision if your application has been accepted for the new counselor training, and you will be invited to attend the mandatory orientation session and the mandatory five-day training program (two days per week for three weeks).


Training topics include: Medicare Overview, Original Medicare (Parts A&B), Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C), Medicare Prescription Drug coverage (Part D), Medicare Supplemental Plans, Programs related to Medicare (Basic Medicaid, Medicare Savings Program; Extra Help/Low Income Subsidy.

**Why does this volunteer opportunity require a background and criminal record check?**

Great question! The **CHOICES** Program takes very seriously the safety of information from Medicare Beneficiaries. To that extent, **CHOICES** Counselors are deemed "positions of trust", meaning they involve access to personal information from clients.

**Is a fee required?**

For true volunteers the training is free of charge. For in-kind (paid) professionals there is a fee of $125. Training manuals are provided.

**Insurance Agents, brokers and financial planners** are not eligible to apply for training.

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