Health Justice Volunteer: Volunteer Position Description

Thank you so much for your interest in volunteering with the Health and Economic Opportunity Program (HEOP) as a Health Justice Navigator! Every year, we help hundreds of people across Western North Carolina enroll in health care coverage for themselves and their families, and we couldn't do it without our army of volunteers. Your work will help people gain or keep their health insurance coverage, which can be life-saving for consumers.

Note that we typically only onboard new volunteers in August for the Open Enrollment season starting November 1st of each year.

Overview

Health Justice volunteers within HEOP will work with consumers to help them enroll in health insurance coverage through the ACA Marketplace, or through Medicaid. Volunteers will help consumers understand their health coverage options, determine their income and household size, complete an application for health care coverage, and – for Marketplace coverage – help consumers choose the plan that works best for them. This work can be done in person at the Asheville office, or over the phone from home.

Volunteer Requirements

- Understand the needs and challenges of underserved and vulnerable populations, and a desire to work within these communities
- Possess socio-economic and cultural sensitivity and interpersonal skills necessary to communicate with people who may be angry, upset, or ill
- Pass a background check
- Be able to commit to:
    - Self-study to prepare for the exam (~10 hours)
    - Taking and passing the annual Navigator certification training and exam (~10-20 hours)
    - Attend in-person or virtual trainings (~15 hours)
    - Volunteering at least 4 hours per week during Open Enrollment (Nov 1 – Jan 15)
- Possess strong computer skills and the ability to navigate Microsoft email, online

scheduling systems, online applications for Medicaid or the Marketplace, and other online forms that will need to be completed

- Must be free from conflicts of interests, including payments and incentives from brokers, insurers, or insurance industry

Volunteer Duties

- Take and pass the certification training and exam
- Watch all webinar training videos
- Attend or watch the recording of the PLS Navigator Training in late October
- Sign up for appointment slots so consumers can make appointments
- Call/text consumer before the appointment to answer any questions and to confirm
- Conduct health insurance application appointments, either in person at the Asheville office, or over the phone, where you will:
    - Determine if someone is eligible for Marketplace coverage or Medicaid
    - Help people understand what they are eligible for
        - Marketplace: make sure they understand premium tax credits, tax implications for under/over estimating their income, what plans are available to them, and help them determine which plan would be best for them by talking through premium cost, deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, co-pays, and coverage
        - Medicaid: make sure they understand that Medicaid is full health insurance, and that they will need to renew regularly
- Provide referrals to other agencies when there are other needs
- Provide all information and services in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate and ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities

How We Support Volunteers

- In-person trainings for new volunteers to go through all the steps and make sure everyone knows the certification process
- 2-day training in October (can be attended virtually or you can watch the recording) after everyone is certified to go through more nuanced training and PLS-specific training
- All volunteers will shadow at least 2 appointments, and will be observed for at least 2 appointments before taking appointments on their own

- If you have a question during an appointment, volunteers can call the Volunteer Phone – this is a phone line that is monitored 40 hours a week (and during Open Enrollment, on some weekday evenings) by HEOP Directors who can help you think through any issues you are having or to answer questions
- Access to laptops to take home if needed

If you are interested in volunteering, please visit https://www.pisgahlegal.org/volunteer/healthjustice/, and click on "Volunteer Application." If you have questions or want to talk any of this through, you can reach out to Katie at katie.alexander@pisgahlegal.org, or 828-341-6523. Thank you so much for your interest – we can't do what we do without your help!

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