



# Chapter 1: STARS Introduction

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## System Overview

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 grantee activities to the federal government. Go to <https://stars.acl.gov>. STARS replaced SHIP National Performance Reporting (NPR) system in 2018 during a graduated roll-out process from March through November.



The system was designed and matured through a series of interviews with SHIPs that entered data into the SHIP National Performance Reporting (NPR) system, co-located SHIP and SMP grantees, and SHIP grantees using propriety tools. These interviews were used to drive conversations with ACL around their vision for this system and the future needs of the

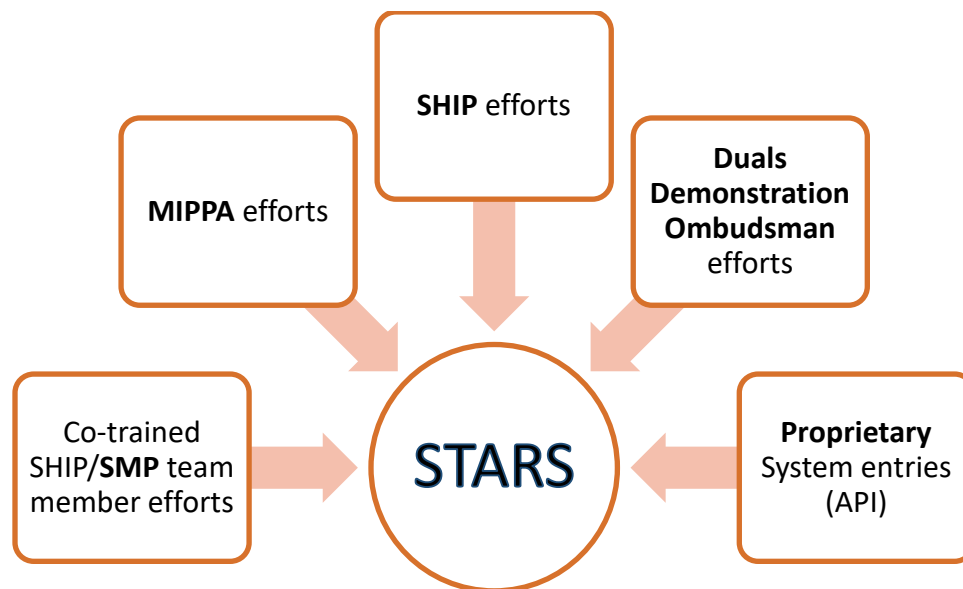


programs to design a tool that will bring value as SHIP and SMP evolve. These conversations culminated in the building of the new SHIP Data System.

STARS was built and is housed by Booz Allen Hamilton under contract with ACL using the *entellitrak* cloud based software platform, which offers a modernized user experience for SHIPs as they work to provide Medicare beneficiaries with information, counseling, and enrollment assistance.

## Programs That Use STARS

The ACL OHIC office oversees the SHIP Program, Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program, and the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program. STARS is also the reporting platform for MIPPA grantees, duals demonstration ombudsman one-to-one counseling grantees, and it communicates with the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) national data reporting system, SIRS (**S**MP **I**nformation and **R**eporting **S**ystem). Many SHIP programs are also MIPPA grantees and SMP grantees. Non-SHIP MIPPA grantees also use STARS. STARS is the data collection system for and streamlines the data reporting process for all of these programs.



Data entry instructions for MIPPA efforts, the efforts of co-trained SHIP/SMP team members, and duals demonstration ombudsman efforts are embedded into the subsequent chapters about entering team members, beneficiary contacts, group outreach efforts, and media outreach efforts.

## STARS and Proprietary Systems

Over 60% of SHIPs and some MIPPA-only programs rely on proprietary systems to transfer some or all of their SHIP performance data into STARS. This is accomplished through a “real time” data transfer process called Application Programming Interface (API).

API benefits compared to batch uploads include:



- Less drain on the data system because data is transferring in smaller amounts in real time, not in large amounts on certain days
- More secure
- Allows users to see their data in reports in real time rather than waiting until after a monthly batch upload has occurred

## STARS to SIRS

Due to key programmatic similarities between the SHIP and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) programs, STARS allows system-wide functionality that will support both programs. SHIPs and SMPs with co-trained team members have requested of their federal administrators at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for over a decade. Approximately half of SHIP and SMP grantees nationally are co-located, and many other SHIP and SMP programs have agreements for co-training team members in SHIP and SMP. This results in some SHIP team members performing SMP activities and vice versa. The SMP data reporting system, SIRS, was also built by Booz Allen Hamilton using the same platform upon which STARS was built.



By sharing a platform, database, and similar workflows, the new SHIP Data System has the potential to reduce data entry redundancy for co-located states and co-trained team members, creating a more efficient user experience and more seamless program collaboration between SHIP and SMP. Instructions for sending data from STARS to SIRS (i.e. “Send to SMP”) are embedded throughout the manual.

### Here are some other considerations:

- STARS and SIRS users will have separate accounts, so they must be entered as team members within both systems.
- STARS users and SIRS users have separate user accounts, requiring two sets of log-in credentials. (Single log-in hybrid credentials to grant users access to both systems are not possible.)
- SIRS data does not and cannot transfer to STARS; the directional flow is one way: from STARS to SIRS only.



- Only team members and SMP complex interactions are entered separately into SIRS.
- Time spent cannot be divided between the SHIP and SMP content. ACL accepts that the entire time spent on a simple interaction or outreach events will be counted in



both STARS and SIRS. Time spent on complex interactions must be reported in SIRS, not STARS.

- If saved data must be corrected or updated later, it must be edited in both systems. Edits do not transfer from STARS to SIRS.

## SIRS Support

Like STARS, the SIRS data system is supported by ACL, Booz Allen Hamilton, and the SMP National Resource Center ([www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org)). Need help with SIRS? Here is contact information for a variety of assistance options.

- **Help using SIRS:** Sara Lauer, SMP Resource Center; slauer@smpresource.org; 319-874-6859; SIRS@smpresource.org
- **Questions about SIRS training:** Heather Flory, SMP Resource Center; hflory@smpresource.org; 319-874-6844
- **SIRS technical issues and password reset assistance:** Booz Allen Hamilton Help Desk; 703-377-4411 or BoozAllenSIRSHelpDesk@bah.com

## STARS and MIPPA

The new SHIP Data System supports the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program. MIPPA is the original legislation that provided federal funding to SHIPs, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) to help low-income Medicare beneficiaries apply for programs that make Medicare affordable.

- The forms in STARS allow users to mark whether an interaction should be counted for MIPPA reporting purposes. It immediately precedes the “Send the SMP” radio button. This is a required field.

MIPPA

Yes
  No
  R

- Guidance for MIPPA-qualifying data entry specific to other forms in STARS will be addressed in other chapters.
- A STARS-generated MIPPA Performance Measures Report is planned for later in 2019

## SHIP NPR to STARS Transition

STARS will preserve SHIP reporting history by housing previous SHIP NPR data.

### Data Transfer

The SHIP NPR client contact (CC) and Public and Media (PAM) transferred data was moved to the state level in STARS. When accessing SHIP NPR data in STARS, keep in mind the following:

- The *Session Conducted By* field on NPR-transferred data will be blank in STARS. Counselor name was saved in the 4th Special Use Field (SUF) in the transfer, and Agency name was saved to the 5th SUF.



- All Performance Measure reports will still work correctly when using transferred data because these reports are pulled based on zip code data
- State users will be able to access and reassign data to the local level if needed, including client cases. If this information needs to be migrated further down in your [STARS hierarchy](#), contact [Booz Allen Hamilton](#) for assistance.

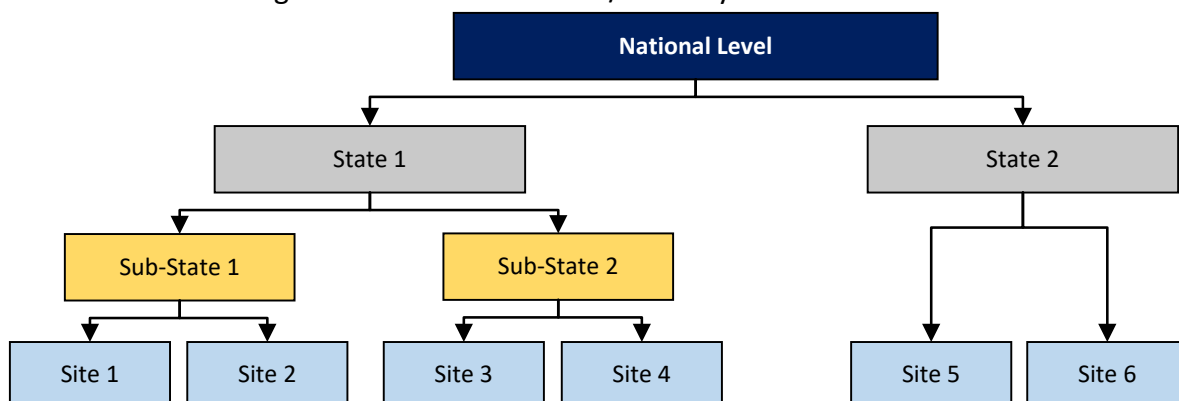
### Differences and Similarities between STARS and SHIP NPR

This table outlines the similarities and differences between STARS and SHIP NPR.

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationwide, web-based data collection and reporting systems</li> <li>• Facilitates reporting of SHIP activities:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Beneficiary contacts</li> <li>○ Outreach and education</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Role-based</li> <li>• Compatible with proprietary data systems</li> <li>• 508 compliant</li> <li>• Facilitates MIPPA reporting</li> <li>• CMS SHIP Unique ID functionality</li> <li>• Availability of a help desk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust Search menu for finding data rather than limited “report” queries</li> <li>• Team members can be aligned with only one organization</li> <li>• User roles can be edited</li> <li>• Usernames are not email addresses</li> <li>• Send to SMP functionality for co-trained SHIP/SMP team member efforts</li> <li>• Application Programming Interface (API) data transfer from proprietary systems instead of batch upload</li> <li>• Group Outreach form separated from Media Outreach form (not combined into PAM)</li> <li>• Fewer Special Use fields, and the field labels aren’t editable</li> <li>• Performance Measures Report and Resource Report are built into STARS</li> <li>• Training offered by SHIP TA Center</li> </ul>

### STARS Hierarchy

The data in STARS is organized hierarchically. Each entity within the hierarchy represents an organization. National Level organizations include Booz Allen Hamilton, ACL, and the SHIP TA Center. State level organizations are SHIP state/territory offices.





Program leaders chose to use a three-level hierarchy, like State 1 in the example above, a two-level hierarchy, like State 2 in the example above, or a state-only hierarchy (no Sub-States or Sites).

The number of Sub-States and/or Sites was determined by leaders at the state (or territory) level. The hierarchy for each SHIP was built into STARS prior to the March 22, 2018 launch, based upon instruction from each state/territory program director.

Each organization is able to access all records associated with their organization and, if applicable, those that sit below them in the hierarchy. STARS user roles, which are outlined in the Team Member Management chapter, are affected by the STARS Hierarchy.

In states where there are MIPPA-only programs, they will have their own hierarchy, with the main office being the state level organization in their hierarchy.

## Due Dates for Data Collection

SHIPs must submit data to STARS on a monthly basis. The schedule below displays the timeline during each year when data must be entered into STARS.

Month Effort Occurred	Data Entry Due Dates for Efforts
January	February 28
February	March 31
March	April 30
April	May 31
May	June 30
June	July 31
July	August 31
August	September 30
September	October 31
October	November 30
November	December 31
December	January 31



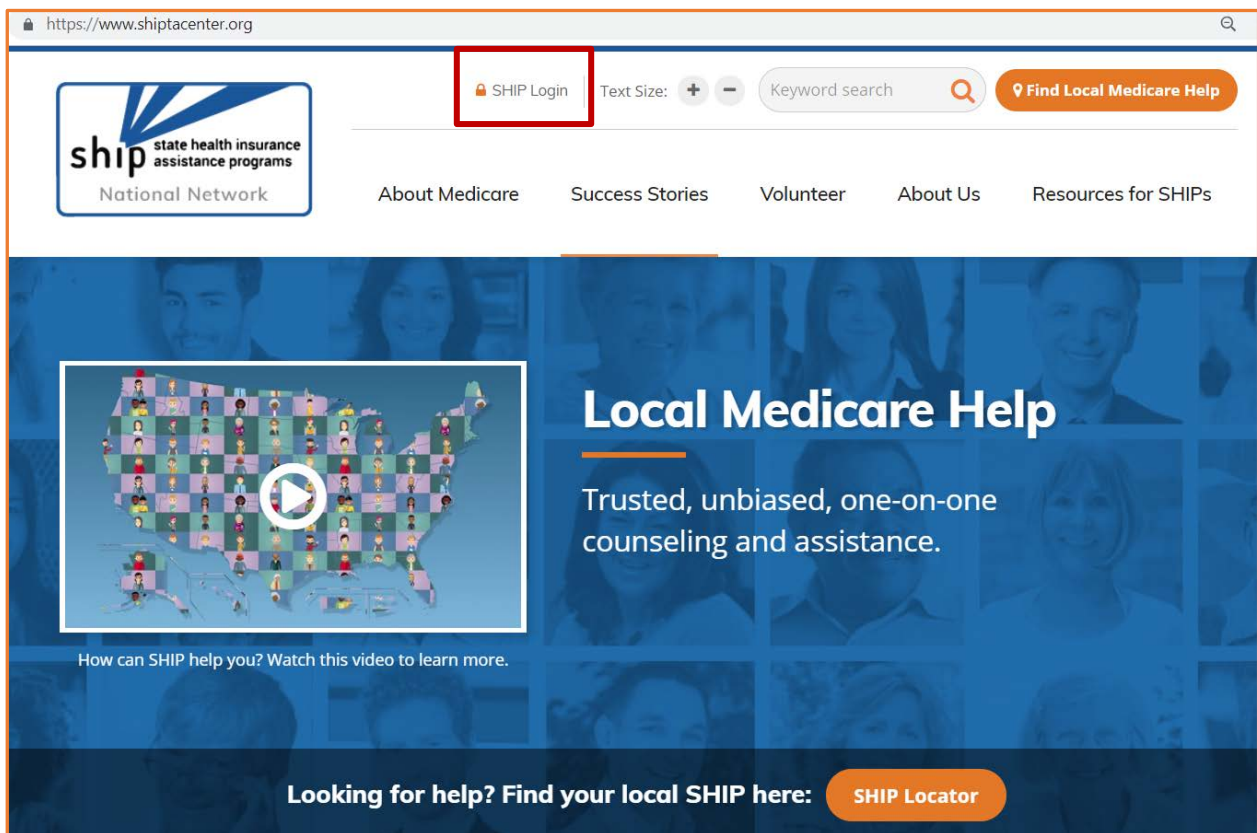
# STARS Support and Training Resources

The SHIP National Technical Assistance Center (SHIP TA Center) hosts all STARS training webinars and houses all STARS educational materials, including job aids and this manual. During the 2018 STARS roll-out, a robust series of webinars were offered monthly to provide continuous training for all SHIPs. They are recorded and are archived in the SHIP Resource Library. Ongoing training will continue to be provided by ACL, Booz Allen Hamilton, and the SHIP TA Center.



## Accessing Resources

For security reasons, you must now log into the SHIP TA Center’s website to access STARS Resources: [www.shiptacenter.org](http://www.shiptacenter.org). They are in the SHIP Resource Library. Conduct a keyword search in the SHIP Resource Library for the term “STARS.”



## Registering at [www.shiptacenter.org](http://www.shiptacenter.org)

If you do not have an account at [www.shiptacenter.org](http://www.shiptacenter.org), contact your supervisor or submit a request at [www.shiptacenter.org](http://www.shiptacenter.org) to become a registered user.





1. To register, click the green button at the bottom of the Login page for [www.shiptacenter.org](http://www.shiptacenter.org).
2. Complete the Account Sign-Up form that will pop up.
3. You will need to wait for a SHIP director or administrator to review and approve your request.

To request access to the SHIP-only area of this website, which is password protected, please complete the fields below. Your request will be reviewed for approval by your SHIP program administrator.

**\*Role** (\* = required field)

**\*First Name /Last Name**

**\*Email**

**\*Password**  
  
Your password must be between 8 to 30 characters and must contain at least one upper case letter, at least one digit and at least one special character, with the exception of the characters < and &, which cannot be used.

**\*Confirm Password**

**\*Phone**

**\*City /State**

**\*Organization**

**\*Reason for this request**

### Login

Email address

Password

[Forgot your password?](#)

### Not a Registered User?

This webpage is intended only for State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) representatives. If you are a member of the general public and wish to learn more about the SHIP program, click on "Learn about SHIPs" below. If you are a SHIP staff member, counselor, or volunteer who needs access, click on "Submit request to be a Registered User."

[Learn about SHIPs](#)

## Technical Assistance

- **Booz Allen Hamilton (a.k.a. "Booz Allen"):** For STARS technical assistance, such as for difficulties with usernames and passwords, contact the Booz Allen STARS help desk at [boozallenstarshelpdesk@bah.com](mailto:boozallenstarshelpdesk@bah.com) or 703-377-4424.
- **SHIP National Technical Assistance Center (SHIP TA Center):**
  - **STARS Support.** The SHIP TA Center provides webinar training, technical assistance, and written job aids on STARS. Contact the SHIP TA Center, [stars@shiptacenter.org](mailto:stars@shiptacenter.org) or 877-839-2675.
  - **Resource Library Support.** For assistance finding STARS resources in the password-protected Resource Library at [www.shiptacenter.org](http://www.shiptacenter.org), contact the SHIP TA Center at 877-839-2675 or [info@shiptacenter.org](mailto:info@shiptacenter.org).
- **Administration for Community Living (ACL):** If you have questions for ACL about the overall administration of STARS, email [ship@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:ship@acl.hhs.gov).