Hampton Roads Disability Board
SOAR Orientation

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SOAR Technical Assistance Center
The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
Purpose and Objectives

• Share the importance of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits
  – Including income, health insurance, education and employment supports, and housing stability

• Offer opportunities for community members to get involved with SOAR
  – Connecting to local SOAR efforts, the SOAR Online Course, and the SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) program
What is SOAR?

• A model for assisting eligible individuals to apply for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits
• For individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder, or other physical disabilities
• Sponsored by SAMHSA in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 2005
• All 50 states and Washington, DC currently participate
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Eligibility based on need: low income and resources; living arrangement
- Monthly amount based on Federal Benefit Rate: $794/month (2021)*
- Date of eligibility based on Protective Filing Date/Application Date
- Health insurance: Medicaid

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Eligibility based on insured status (FICA payments)
- Monthly amount based on earnings history
- Date of eligibility based on “date of onset” of disability, 5 month waiting period
- Health insurance: Medicare

*https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-general-ussi.htm
SSA’s Definition of Disability

Medical Condition(s)
- Diagnosis
- Documentation
- Duration

Functional Impairment(s)
- Severity
- Work
- SGA
SOAR Eligibility: Decision Tree

SOAR Eligibility: Decision Tree

SSA/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and is a national program designed to increase access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) for eligible adults and children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

Should I complete a SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI application?

Does the individual (child, youth, or adult) have a disabling condition?

One or more serious mental illness(es), medical condition(s), and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder that meets or equals the SSA Listings of Impairments.

Is the individual experiencing or at risk of homelessness?

The SAMHSA SOAR initiative is intended for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These terms are defined differently by SOAR and the Social Security Administration (SSA). The SOAR model follows the definitions of 'homeless' and 'at risk of homelessness' used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The individual is stably housed and is not receiving a voucher or rental assistance.

Use the SOAR model and all five SOAR Critical Components for assisting with SSI/SSDI applications.

Flag the application as SOAR with SSA and Disability Determination Services (DDS).

Track the outcome of the application in the SOAR Online Application Tracking (SOAT) program.

Explore employment support options and other local resources for economic support.

Use the Critical Components as outlined in the SOAR model to assist with a quality SSI/SSDI application. Do not flag as a SOAR application with SSA and DDS.

Use the Critical Components as outlined in the SOAR model to assist with a quality SSI/SSDI application. Do not flag as a SOAR application with SSA and DDS. Do not track the outcomes in the SOAR OAT program.

SOAR Critical Components

Using these five SOAR Critical Components, case workers play a central role in gathering complete, targeted, and relevant information for SSA and DDS, resulting in high-quality SSI/SSDI applications. These components significantly increase the likelihood of an approval for those who are eligible.

1. Serving as the Applicant’s Representative

2. Collecting and Submitting Medical Records

3. Writing and Submitting a Medical Summary Report (MSR)

4. Obtaining a Co-signature on the MSR by an Acceptable Medical Source

5. Completing a Quality Review of Applications Prior to Submission

For more information: soar@prainc.com | (518) 439-7415 | soarworks.prainc.com

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
More Than Income

- Access to health care and housing
- Increased education and employment opportunities
- Decrease in incarcerations and hospitalizations

SSI/SSDI: One Brick in Foundation

Wellness & Recovery
Housing
Treatment support services
SSI/SSDI benefit payments
Employment
Medicaid/Medicare insurance
How do States and Communities Benefit?

SSI and Medicaid bring federal dollars into states, localities, and community programs:

• Health providers can recoup cost of uncompensated care.
• States and localities can recoup the cost of public assistance.
• Cash benefits and back payments received by individuals is spent in the local community (2020: $518 million*).

What Makes SOAR Unique?

SOAR-trained case workers are the heroes!

1. Using the SSA-1696 Appointment of Representative form
2. Collecting & submitting medical records
3. Writing & submitting a Medical Summary Report
4. Obtaining Co-signature on a Medical Summary Report
5. Completing a quality review of applications before submission

Applications that use all five of the critical components are significantly more likely to be approved!
SOAR Works!

Cumulative Outcomes

CUMULATIVE INITIAL APPROVAL RATE / 65%

47,751 Cumulative initial approvals
7,459 Cumulative appeal approvals
55,210 people receiving benefits because of SOAR

*National SOAR outcomes as of June 30, 2020

https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/article/soar-outcomes-and-impact
## 2020 National Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Approval Rate</th>
<th>Number of Approvals</th>
<th>Average Days to Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>65%*</td>
<td>4,265</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As compared to a 30.8% approval rate for all SSI/SSDI applicants nationwide (SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2019. Table 70. SSA Pub. No. 13-11827. Washington, D.C.: SSA, August 2020)*

### Financial Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average General Assistance Reimbursement</th>
<th>Average Medicaid Reimbursement</th>
<th>Average Retroactive Back Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average General</td>
<td>$3,144</td>
<td>$10,529</td>
<td>$6,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance Reimbursement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid Reimbursement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Payment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SOAR Super Stars!

*Inclusion: Highest cumulative approval rates on initial application for states with at least 325 cumulative decisions, at least 24 decisions in 2021 (2 per month), and a 2020 approval rate above the national average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4021</td>
<td>3637</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2655</td>
<td>2389</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1706</td>
<td>1467</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>1032</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>3112</td>
<td>2358</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2175</td>
<td>1593</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2147</td>
<td>1544</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3166</td>
<td>2173</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1658</td>
<td>1125</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>1641</td>
<td>1259</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>22510</td>
<td>17754</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Combined, these states had 26,323 decisions*
SOAR Leadership Structure

**SOAR TA Center**
- Facilitates strategic planning meetings
- Conducts Leadership Academies, webinars, & learning communities
- Develops resources, including SOARWorks, the SOAR Online Course, and OAT
- Provides TA at all stages of SOAR implementation

**State Team Lead**
- Facilitates state steering committee
- Directs plans to grow & sustain statewide activities
- Serves as liaison to localities
- Maintains relationships with SSA & DDS
- Submits SOAR outcomes to the TA Center

**Local Lead**
- Facilitates local steering committee
- Directs local implementation plans
- Facilitates SOAR Online Course cohorts
- Conducts SOAR Online Course Review Sessions
- Ensures quality applications & reports outcomes

**Case Manager**
- Completes high-quality SSI & SSDI applications using the SOAR model
- Communicates with local SSA & DDS representatives
- Tracks application outcomes

*OAT: Online Application Tracking Program
*DDS: Disability Determination Services
*TA: Technical Assistance
Oh, the support you will receive!

SOAR TA Center Activities and Support

SOAR Online Course
SOAR Leadership Academy
SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) Program
SOARWorks Library
Individual Technical Assistance
SOARing Over Lunch
SOAR eNews
Bi-Monthly Webinars
Benefits of the SOAR Online Course

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Online Course: Adult Curriculum

- Standardized training provided across all geographic areas
- SOAR Leaders can coordinate follow-up training and support
- Course is FREE, web-based, and self-guided
- 20 CEUs from National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
SOAR Online Course: Articles and Practice Case

Articles and Content

What is SOAR?

SOAR (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) is a program designed to increase access to Social Security Disability (SSA) disability benefits for eligible individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

Many people with disabilities who experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. These barriers to accessing the community often lead to increased stress, financial difficulties, and physical and/or mental health issues that can result in homelessness. Many suffer from disabling mental illnesses, co-occurring substance use, trauma, and medical issues that impair their ability to work. The path to recovery can be extraordinarily challenging when one is concurrently struggling to meet basic needs. Having income and health care benefits is often a critical first step on the road to recovery.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has two programs that can provide assistance:
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a needs-based program, for individuals who are blind, disabled, or elderly, with low income/resources.
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for blind or disabled individuals who are insured through employee and employer contributions to the Social Security Trust Fund.

In most states, Medicaid and/or Medicare health insurance accommodate these benefits for those eligible.

Circumstances can impede access to income and health care benefits:
- SSA: Commonly denied by mail, which is a challenge when one does not have a permanent, reliable address.
- People who are experiencing homelessness often have episodic medical care, making it difficult to access medical records to document disability.
- Symptoms can interfere with cognitive functioning, making it difficult to navigate a complex system.

SOAR helps overcome these barriers!

SOAR (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) is a Best Practice supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

- Designed to help states increase access to SSA/SSDI for eligible adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

- Classes in this course:
  1. The Need for SOAR
  2. Overview of Social Security Disability Programs: SSI and SSDI
  3. SSA: What Is Disability?
  4. Access to SSA Disability Programs: Benefits, Rules, & Tests
  5. Steps in the SSA Disability Application Process
  6. Disability Determination: The SSA Sequential Evaluation
  7. The SOAR Model: Critical Components
  8. The SOAR Process: Critical Components in Action
  9. Determinations of Homelessness
  10. Identifying SSA Applicants
  11. SOAR Value
  12. Try It: Key Concepts of Class 1
  13. Conclusion

Practice Case

Practice Case: Meet Your Client

Welcome to the SOAR Online Course Practice Case!

Practice Case pages appear at the end of each class, designated by a blue icon. Detailed instructions are provided under “Tasks for This Class.”

Your name is “Kris Stills” from XYZ Community Mental Health Center and you are assisting “Michael Byrne” to apply for SSA/SSDI.

You will learn more about Michael on each Practice Case page via interview videos, progress notes, and medical records.

Let’s meet Michael...

- Practice Case Materials:
  - Practice Case Task Guide.pdf
  - SSA Forms Guide.pdf
  - Practice Case MSW Tips.pdf
  - MSW Interview Guide and Tool Set.pdf
  - SSA-SNAP Appointment of Representative.pdf

Tasks for this Class:

- Save ALL OF THE DOCUMENTS provided in the Practice Case Materials Box.
  - Right-click on each file, choose “Save Target As” or “Save Link As,” and save in an easily accessible location on YOUR computer. (Having difficulty? Here are some troubleshooting tips.)
  - Review the four “Details” tabs - these will help you proceed successfully through the Practice Case.
  - The free SSA forms and a Medical Summary Report are uploaded later in the Course once you have learned more about your applicant and are able to complete them.

View the Applicant Interview Video:

- Take notes on what you observe about the applicant.
- You can come back to this page at any time to view the video again.
Getting Involved: Time Commitment

- **Training:** 20 hours
- **20-40 hours per complete application**
- **SOAR Critical Components**
- **Outcome Tracking**
- **Benefit to Your Agency and the Individuals You Serve**
Virginia SOAR Certification Process

- Complete the SOAR Online Course
- Attend Virginia Specific Certification Training
  - After completing the online training, potential SOAR workers must attend a one day, in person (or virtual) course review and certification session. Upon completion of this certification training an individual receives Certified SOAR Worker designation.
- Regularly engage with your area’s SOAR Local Lead and State Team Lead
- Report all SOAR outcomes in OAT
Online Application Tracking (OAT)

All the reasons OAT is awesome!

- Web based
- User friendly
- HIPAA compliant
- Monitors quality
- Takes only 3-5 minutes
- It’s FREE!

https://soartrack.samhsa.gov
OAT Case Worker Dashboard

My Initial Outcomes
- Approvals: 86 (70%)
- Demands: 37 (30%)
- Days: 30
- Total Initial: 123

Monthly Snapshot
- New Apps this Month: 0
- Approved Apps this Month: 0

New Applicants
- Create Applicant

Sarah Smith - Pending Applications
- Application Type: Show All
- ApiD
- PFD Date
- App Date
- Type: ALJ Hearing using SOAR
- Status: PENDING
- Actions: Continue
Next Steps

• Learn more about SOAR
• Discuss how SOAR can make an impact within your agency/community
• Get in touch with your SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison, SOAR Local Leads, and SOAR State Team Lead
• Register for the SOAR Online Course
When someone engaged with your agency needs to apply for Social Security Disability Benefits, what do you do with them?

– Help them apply?
– Refer?
– Encourage them to apply on their own?

Overall, how is that going? Do you have a 72% approval rate on initial application in approximately 120 days?
Additional Resources

• SOAR Works Website and Online Course: https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/

• SOAR Outcomes Tracking: https://soartrack.samhsa.gov/

• SSA Disability Information: https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/

• SSA Employment Supports: https://choosework.ssa.gov/
Thank You

SAMHSA’s mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities.

https://soarworks.samhsa.gov
soar@prainc.com
www.samhsa.gov

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) ● 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)