

### **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR)**

<b>Requirement:</b>	Contract
<b>Frequency:</b>	Monthly Reporting of SOAR data
<b>Due Date:</b>	N/A

SOAR is a national project funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) that is designed to increase access to SSI/SSDI for eligible adults and children either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless who have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

The Managing Entity shall ensure that Network Service Providers are implementing the SOAR process within their region in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Access to SSI/SSDI is a major tool in recovery from mental illness and homelessness. Without these benefits, it is extraordinarily difficult for individuals who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness to engage in treatment, to keep appointments, to maintain housing, and to meet other basic needs. The online SAMHSA SOAR TA Center offers two Online Courses that train case managers to assist individuals to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). The training can be found at the following website: <https://soarworks.prainc.com/content/soar-online-course-catalog>. The online training provides an in-depth, step-by-step explanation of the SSI/SSDI application and disability determination process for case managers working with this population. It focuses on the initial application and thorough documentation of the disability to avoid appeals, reduce the need for consultative exams, increase approval rates, and reduce times to decisions.

To this end, the Managing Entity has a Regional SOAR Team Lead (RSTL) and is available to provide technical assistance in collaboration with the SAMHSA funded SOAR Technical Assistance Center. The Managing Entity RSTL has also identified other local team leads and trainers available in the region to assist as needed. The Office of SAMH has established a SOAR Stakeholders Committee to serve as the required State Planning Team for implementation, expansion and strategic planning on SOAR initiatives.

#### **A. SOAR Implementation:**

The goal of the SOAR process is designed to increase recovery support; access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The original intention of the program was created to reduce or eliminate homelessness by reducing financial barriers that impede recovery and, in some cases, promote access to care to assist in recovery. The SOAR process assists a defined target population: adults and children with mental illnesses or co-occurring disorders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The process assists these individuals by increasing access to SSI/SSDI benefits.

#### **The Network Service Provider is required to:**

- 1) If the network service provider offers adult mental health general revenue case management services under the LSFHS contract, the provider shall employ one full-time employee to be utilized as a dedicated SOAR processor whose sole duty is to process SOAR applications for SAMH clients. Documentation of the processor's SOAR training will be maintained in the personnel file.
- 2) Each dedicated SOAR processor is required to assist with at least four (4) SSI/SSDI applications per quarter each year.

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- 3) Each dedicated SOAR processor will complete all SSI/SSDI applications within 60 days of the protective filing date, defined as the time when an applicant first contacts the Social Security Administration indicating an intent to file for SSI/SSDI.
- 4) Each dedicated SOAR processor will ensure that 75% of SSI/SSDI applications are completed in a fashion which allows 90 days average to decision. SSA Field office and DDD/DDS processing timeframe issues will be factored in on a case by case basis.
- 5) If applicable, each dedicated SOAR processor will complete the appeal process for those applications which may be denied upon initial review.
- 6) The dedicated SOAR processor will maintain a minimum approval rating of 65% of submitted applications on the initial submission during each calendar year per DCF guidance document 9.
- 7) Ensure SOAR training using the SOAR Online Course and refresher trainings using the SOAR Online Course once every four years for all SOAR staff are completed. SOAR trainings for specifically identified case managers and agency leads using the SOAR Online Course, are available at:
- 8) <https://soarworks.prainc.com/content/soar-online-course-catalog>. A training on how to complete applications for children can also be completed at the following website. Completed child applications can be applied to successful outcomes on a case by case basis. Report data and outcomes to the RSTL and SOAR Technical Assistance Center using the Online Application Tracking (OAT) system, available at: <https://soartrack.prainc.com/login.php>, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Number of SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications;
  - b. Decisions on applications, including appeals; and
  - c. Numbers of days until applications are approved from date of application submission to date of decision.
- 9) Notify Network Manager when SOAR Processor has resigned from the agency.

**Additionally, the Network Service Provider is encouraged to:**

- 1) Attend the regularly convened local planning team meetings to explore and identify funding and sustainability as well as develop a collaborative effort to implement the SOAR model in the region.
- 2) Sign up for a SOAR distribution list that will be organized by the ME for ongoing communication and dissemination of meeting minutes.
- 3) Report progress and challenges during regular meetings or by contacting the appropriate member of the ME staff if meetings cannot be attended by the provider. Providers are also encouraged to identify and address technical assistance needs as consistently as possible.

More information on SOAR can be viewed at <https://soarworks.prainc.com/>

Network Service Providers are encouraged to work closely to gain referrals from their Care Coordination departments, in house psychiatric departments, medical staff, case management, crisis stabilization units/detox services and homeless service Continuums of Care (CoC) providers to assist in locating and confirming consumers with a probable disability which limits or prohibits the ability to work for eligible adults either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless who have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorders.

As eligible and appropriate, it is expected that priority should be given to consumers identified and enrolled in Care Coordination as outlined in Incorporated Document 31-Care Coordination. It is recommended that the SOAR processors have established and make regular contact with the Care Coordination program(s)/person(s) at their agency, if applicable, to identify potential eligible clients to be prioritized for SOAR.

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SOAR will be administered according to DCF Guidance 9, which can be found at following link using the applicable fiscal year: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/managing-entities/>.