



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Implementing ACT in Kansas: Benefits Planning

Jonathan Pendergrass, Housing First
Project Coordinator/SOAR State Lead



MUNROE-MEYER
INSTITUTE

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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At the time of this publication, Miriam Delphin-Rittmon served as Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and Administrator of SAMHSA. The opinions expressed herein are the views of the speakers and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred.

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The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED/
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH
OUR ACTIONS,
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

Announcements

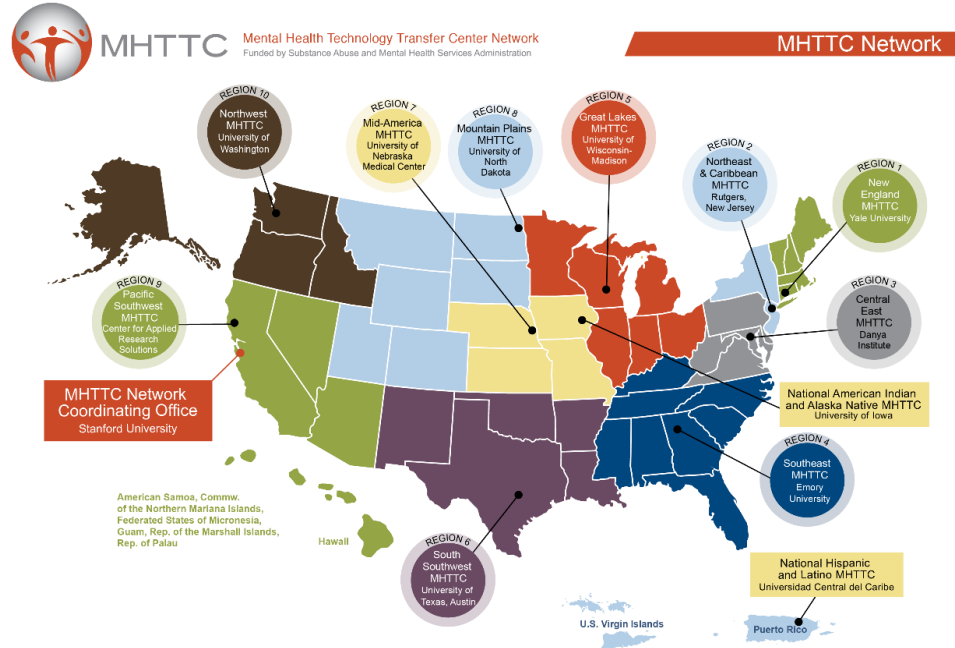
- The recording is available

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mid-america-mhttc/implementing-assertive-community-treatment-act-kansas>

Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

Established to increase utilization of evidence-based mental health practices.

- Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.
- Free training and technical assistance.
- SAMHSA grant awarded to the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska at University of Nebraska Medical Center.
(5 years, \$3.7 million, grant number: H79SM081769)



SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) for Adults Orientation

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
(SAMHSA) SOAR Technical Assistance Center
Policy Research Associates, Inc.

Implementing A.C.T. in Kansas: Benefits Planning (SOAR)
November 16, 2022



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Disclaimer

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

SSI and SSDI: The Basics

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Eligibility based on need: low income and resources; living arrangement
- Monthly amount based on Federal Benefit Rate: \$841/month (2022)
- 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

SSI/SSDI Eligibility: Definition of Disability for Adults

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

SSI/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](#).

Y

N

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.

N

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

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

Y

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

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.

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

Track the outcome of the application in the [SOAR Online Application Tracking \(OAT\)](#) program!

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

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.

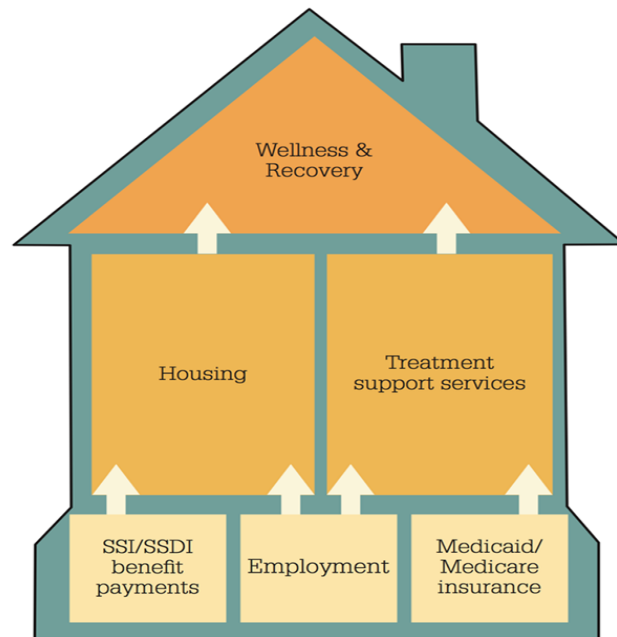
1. Serving as the Applicant's Representative
2. Collecting and Submitting Medical Records
3. Writing and Submitting a Medical Summary Report (MSR)
4. Obtaining a Co-signature on the MSR by an Acceptable Medical Source
5. Completing a Quality Review of Applications Prior to Submission

A Foundation for Recovery and Resiliency

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



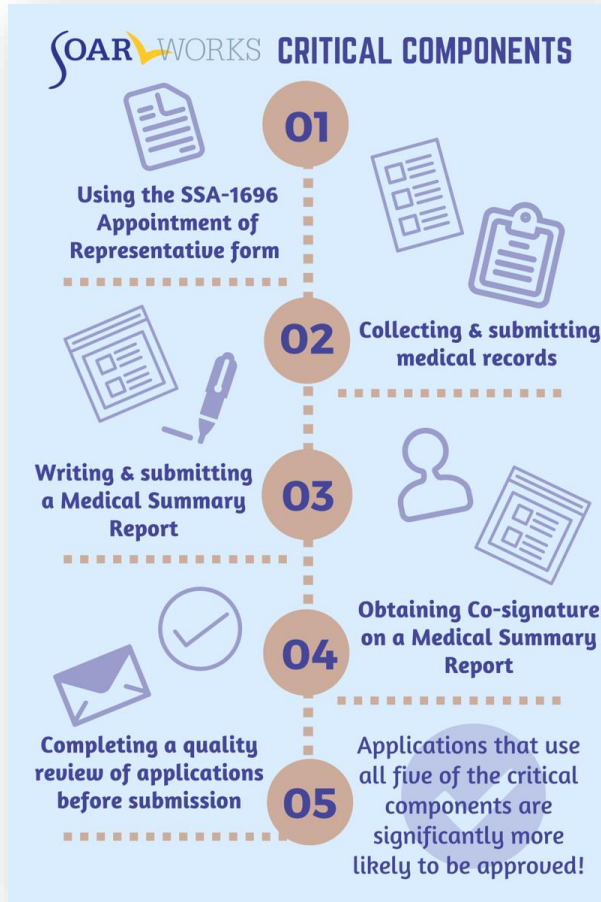
How do States and Communities Benefit?

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 (*2021: \$564 million**).

* <https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/article/soar-outcomes-and-impact>

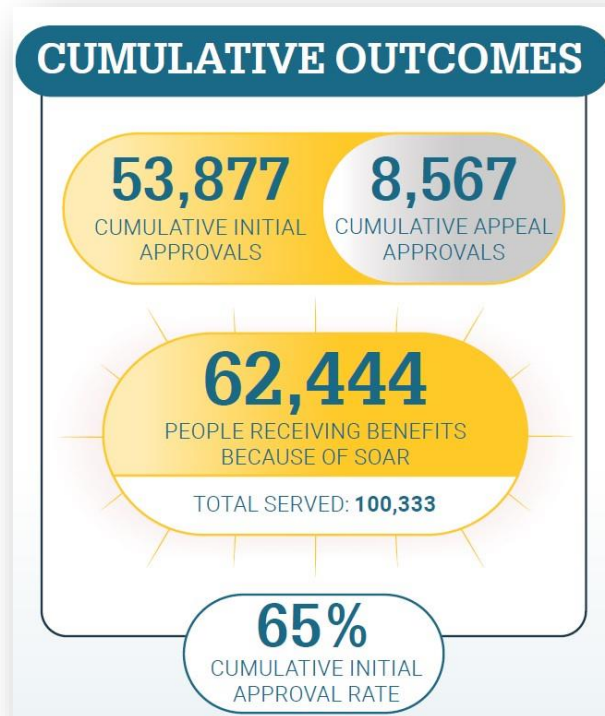
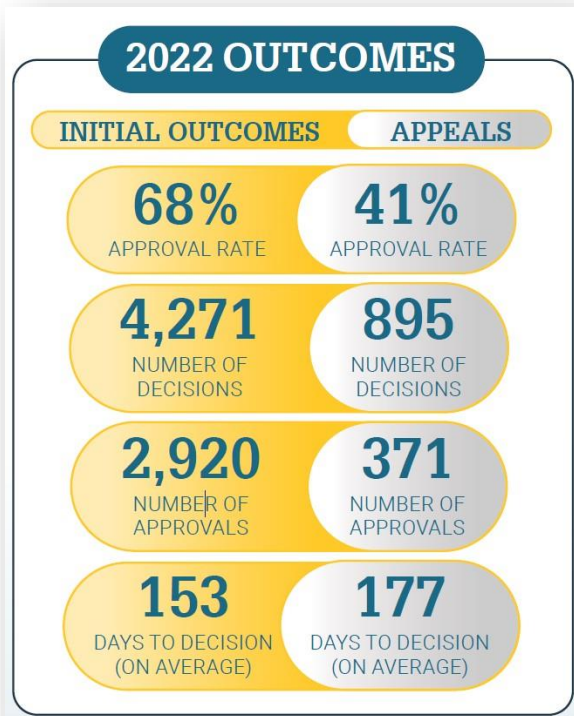
What Makes SOAR Unique?



SOAR-trained case workers are the heroes!



SOAR Works!



*National SOAR outcomes as of June 30, 2022

<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/article/soar-outcomes-and-impact>

2022 Financial Outcomes

FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

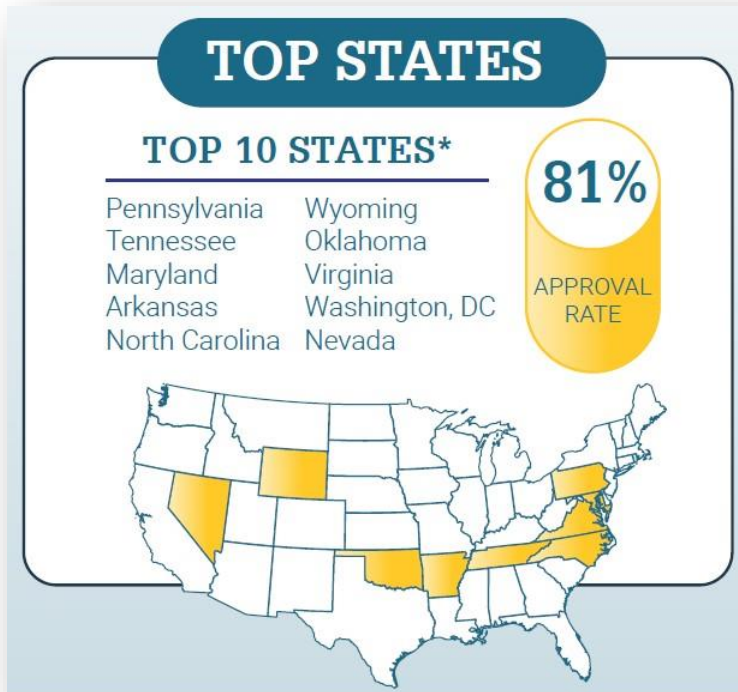
\$25,180 → average Medicaid reimbursement per beneficiary

\$1,686 → average general assistance reimbursement

\$6,552 → average retroactive back payment

\$630M → brought into the economics of participating localities

SOAR Super Stars!



SOAR Critical Components

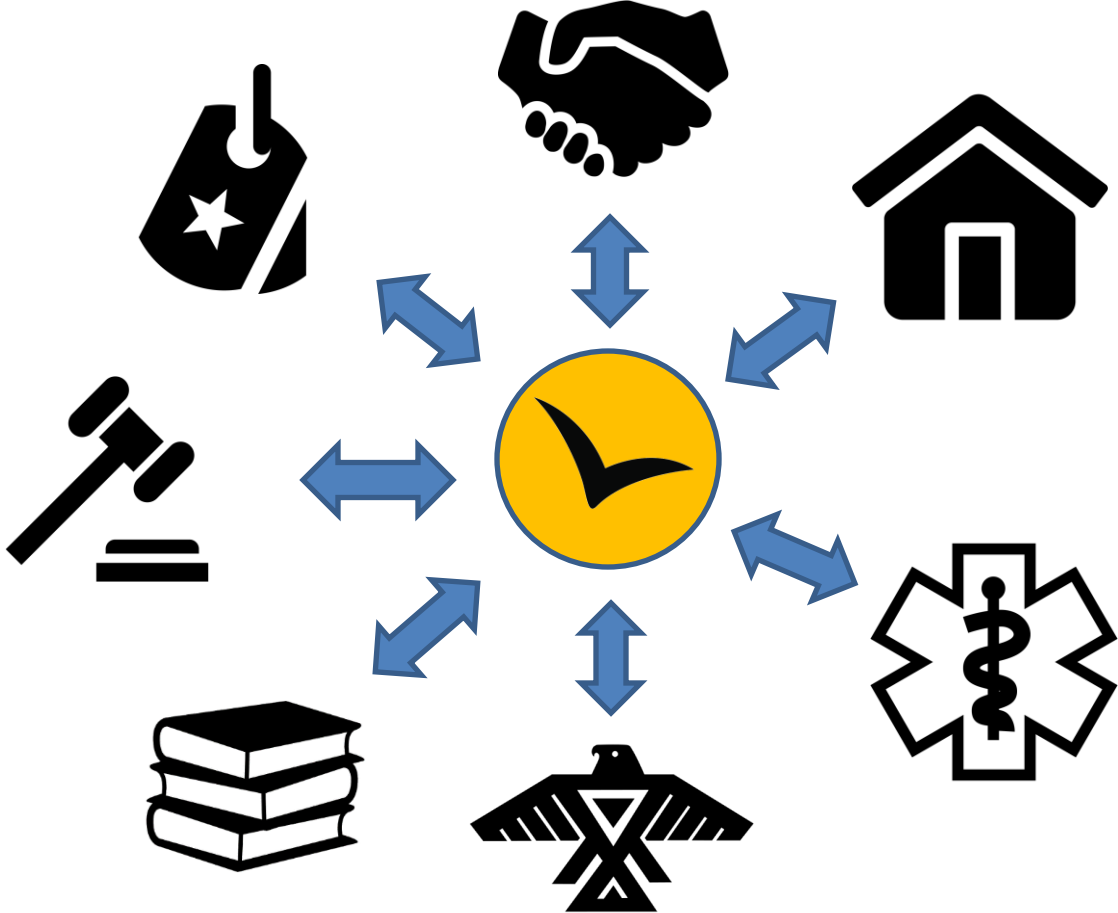
Using these five SOAR Critical Components, case workers play a central role in gathering complete, targeted, and relevant information for SSA and DDS, resulting in high-quality SSI/SSDI applications. These components significantly increase the likelihood of an approval for those who are eligible.

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

*Inclusion: Highest cumulative approval rates on initial application for states with at least 300 cumulative decisions, at least 24 decisions in 2022 (2 per month), and a 2022 approval rate above the national average.

18 Combined, these states had 20,551 decisions

Community Collaborations



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 Courses

- Standardized training provided across all geographic areas
- SOAR Leaders can coordinate follow-up training and support
- Courses are FREE, web-based, and self-guided
- 20 CEUs from National Association of Social Workers (NASW)



SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum

This course trains case workers to assist adults (age 18+) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder to apply for the Social Security Administration's (SSA) disability programs, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).



SOAR Online Course: Child Curriculum

This course trains case workers to assist children (under age 18) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefit program.

SOAR Online Course: Articles and Practice Case

Articles and Content

SAMHSA SOAR WORKS
Course: **SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum** Exit

Class 01: The Need for SOAR

SSA: What is Disability?

Federal and state agencies, including SSA define the term "disability" in various ways. It is important to understand how SSA defines disability.

Print Page | Acronyms & Quick Facts

Pages in this Course:

- Course Introduction
- 01. The Need for SOAR
- 01. What is SOAR?
- 02. Overview of Social Security Disability Programs: SSI and SSDI
- 03. SSA: What is Disability?
- 04. Access to SSA Disability Programs: Players, Roles & Tasks
- 05. Steps in the SSA Disability Application Process
- 06. Disability Determination: The SSA Sequential Evaluation
- 07. The SOAR Model: Critical Components
- 08. The SOAR Process: Critical Components in Action
- 09. Definitions of Homelessness
- 10. Identifying SOAR Applicants
- 11. SOAR Values
- 12. Try It: Key Concepts of Class 1
- 13. Class 1 Conclusion
- 14. Meet Your Client - Practice Case
- 02. Initiating the Application
- 03. Exploring Basic Eligibility
- 04. Medical Information
- 05. The Link to Functioning
- 06. Completing the Application Packet

Disability and Work

The Social Security Administration (SSA) recognizes that a person can have a serious illness or condition yet still be able to work. For example, many people with serious mental illnesses in recovery are able to work. Many enjoy the benefits of work, including:

- An income that goes beyond meeting the most basic needs
- A sense of accomplishment and identity
- The satisfaction of being productive members of their communities

SOAR helps people to access SSI/SSDI in the hope they will eventually be able to enjoy these benefits.

SSA's Definition of Disability

The Social Security Administration (SSA) defines disability as:

- The inability to engage in *substantial gainful activity (SGA)*
- Because of *medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s)*
- That has lasted or is expected to last for a continuous period of *at least 12 months* OR is expected to result in death

Substantial gainful activity (SGA)

- SSA term with specific criteria and calculations
- Activities that are productive (mental or physical)
- "Gainful" – work activity for pay or profit, even if profit is not realized
- Earnings of **\$1,350/month in 2022**
- SSA and DDS need to know: Can the person work at levels of SGA?

Medically determinable

- Physical or mental health conditions
- Must be documented with clear evidence by an acceptable medical source as defined by SSA

Impaired functioning

Practice Case

SAMHSA SOAR WORKS
Course: **SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum** Exit

Class 03: Exploring Basic Eligibility

Practice Case: Collect and Review Medical Records

Print Page | Acronyms & Quick Facts

Pages in this Course:

- Course Introduction
- 01. The Need for SOAR
- 02. Initiating the Application
- 03. Exploring Basic Eligibility
- 01. Exploring Basic Eligibility: "Non-Medical" Information
- 02. SSA and VA Disability Benefits: Tips for Veterans
- 03. SSA-16: Application for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- 04. Information Requested on the Online Disability Benefit Application
- 05. SSA-8000: Application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- 06. SSA-8000: Living Arrangements
- 07. Try It: Living Arrangements
- 08. SSA-8000, Parts 1 & 2: Basic Eligibility and Living Arrangements
- 09. SSA-8000, Parts 3 & 4: Income and Resources
- 10. SSA-8000, Parts 5, 6, 7 & 8
- 11. Class 3 Conclusion
- 12. Collect and Review Medical Records - Practice Case
- 04. Medical Information
- 05. The Link to Functioning
- 06. Completing the Application Packet
- 07. Supporting Resiliency and Recovery
- Course Completion

Welcome to the SOAR Online Course Practice Case!

Tasks for this Class:

- Learn about your applicant**
 - View the interview video.
 - Read the progress notes and medical records.
- Begin to fill out forms SSA-8000 and SSA-16**
 - Open the blank forms you saved to your computer on the Class 1 Practice Case page, *Meet Your Client*.
 - Begin to fill in the forms electronically and **save your changes**.
 - You will upload these completed forms on the Class 4 Practice Case page.
- Begin writing the Medical Summary Report (MSR)**
 - Use the MSR Template provided on the Class 1 Practice Case page, *Meet Your Client*.
 - Use the information you have learned about your applicant to begin writing the *Personal History* Section.
 - You will upload the completed MSR on the Class 6 Practice Case page.

Need help? Read our [troubleshooting tips](#) or [watch this video](#) about saving/completing forms. You can also email us at soaronline@wvsnrc.com.

Step 1: Watch the Video

Watch the Interview Video and take notes on what you observe. 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



Getting Involved with SOAR

You want to be a SOAR provider? That's great! Here's what to expect.

SOAR promotes recovery and wellness through increased access to Social Security disability benefits for eligible individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. SOAR providers assist individuals with complete and quality applications. This is not an easy task, and we want to be sure that you understand the commitment required – we believe it is well worth the effort!

Training

The SOAR Online Course trains providers to assist individuals with the Social Security disability application process. The course includes an Adult Curriculum for assisting with Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) claims for adults and a Child Curriculum for assisting with SSI claims for children.

- The SOAR Online Course: Adult and Child Curriculums are free and are located on the SOARWorks website (<https://soarworks.prainc.com/content/soar-online-course-catalog>).
- Each curriculum consists of seven classes, each of which has a series of articles, short quizzes, and a practice case component. The practice case provides an opportunity for trainees to apply what they have learned in the course by completing a sample application packet for a fictitious applicant using SOAR techniques.
- It takes approximately 20 hours to complete each curriculum and participants can work at their own pace, starting and stopping as they wish. However, we encourage students to complete the curriculum within 30 days to retain the information learned.
- Upon successful completion, participants will receive 20 CEUs (continuing education units) from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Many SOAR Local Leads offer one-day SOAR Online Course Review Sessions to review key components of the curriculum, discuss local/state practices, and connect new providers to local Social Security Administration (SSA) and DDS (Disability Determination Services) offices.

Time Commitment

We estimate that each SOAR application will take approximately 20-40 hours to complete, from initial engagement to receiving a decision on a claim. This generally occurs over the course of 60-90 days.

- The time spent on each application will vary depending on the amount of engagement that is needed as well as other variables such as the experience level of the SOAR worker. For example, engagement with an applicant who is residing in an institution may take 20 hours, while it may take longer to connect with someone who is living outside or difficult to contact.

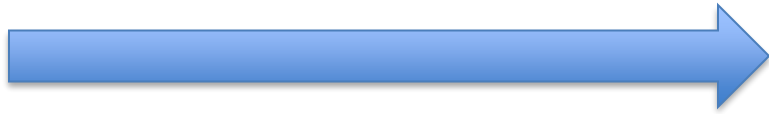
SOAR Critical Components

SOAR providers with higher approval rates credit their success to implementing the SOAR critical components⁹ and submitting high quality applications. Use of these components significantly increases the

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





Online Application Tracking

[Logout](#)

Dashboard Applications Reports Help
Hi, Sarah Smith (Case Worker)

Dashboard

Sarah Smith (Case Worker)
Agency One • Test City • YY

Stats
358 Apps

Created
05/14/2015

Email
ssmith_cw@agencyone.com

ID
12100

My Initial Outcomes

Approvals 75% 174 Approved	Denials 25% 58 Denied	Decisions 233 Total Initial	Days 67 AVG Days
---	------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------

Approvals

YY Approvals 85% 100 Total	National 65% 79034 Total
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New Applicants

Required Format: two letters, two numbers, two letters, four numbers. Example: aa11bb2222

Snapshots & Summaries

Monthly Snapshot (September 2022)

9 NEW APPS

Initial 7 Total	ALJ
--------------------	-----

4 APPROVED APPS

Initial 4 Total	ALJ
--------------------	-----

Top CWs last Quarter (Initials)

Sarah Smith

2 Approvals
100% of 2 Total Decisions

Top CWs last Quarter (Appeals)

Reconsideration

Sarah Smith

1 Approvals
50% of 2 Total Decisions

ALJ Hearing

No Results

Pending Applications All Applications

Application Type

Show All

Show 10

Search Applications

ApID	Current App	Status	Days	# Apps	Actions
aa11aa1110	Initial SOAR Application	Denied	0	2	Actions
aa11bb2020	Initial SOAR Application	Archived	-	0	Continue
aa11bb2224	Initial SOAR Application	Approved	62	1	Actions
aa11ss1234	Reconsideration using SOAR	Archived	-	0	Continue
aa12bb1234	Initial SOAR Application	Approved	0	1	Actions
aa34bb3456	Initial SOAR Application	Approved	11	1	Actions
aa34tt5678	Initial SOAR Application	Approved	8	1	Actions
aa57rd1967	ALJ Hearing using SOAR	Approved	25	2	Actions
aa82ba1234	Reconsideration using SOAR	Approved	0	1	Continue
aa85bb1234	Initial SOAR Application	Approved	246	1	Actions

Next Steps

- Learn more about SOAR
- Get in touch with your SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison
- Reach out to your local or state SOAR leads
- Register for the SOAR Online Course

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)

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Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

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Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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