



Implementing State and Local SOAR Initiatives in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

State, Local, and Tribal Leads spearhead and coordinate the implementation of SOAR initiatives. These leaders identify and engage stakeholders to participate in steering committees whose goal is to create and implement a SOAR action plan to support adult and child applications for Social Security disability benefits. These committees meet regularly to collaborate, report on progress, and troubleshoot challenges.

Introduce SOAR to Your Community

- Identify and engage state, local, and tribal agencies and stakeholders to participate in your community's SOAR initiative. Educate and inform them about the purpose and benefits of SOAR for individuals in your community with disabilities.
- Offer SOAR Orientation presentations for tribal and organizational leadership and direct service providers.
- Attend existing community meetings and share information about the importance and impact of SOAR.

Train and Support Staff That Assist Adult SSI/SSDI and/or Child SSI Applicants

- Identify programs and organizations within your community that are currently assisting adults, children, and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness with Social Security disability applications. Explore reallocation of existing resources to incorporate fully or partially dedicated SOAR benefits specialists.
- Identify staff to complete the SOAR Online Course: Adult and/or Child Curriculum. Provide guidance throughout and following the training. Inform trainees of any state/local/tribal-specific processes.
- Establish quality review procedures to assess fidelity to the SOAR model and ensure that applications are complete and high quality. Get feedback from SSA/DDS on SOAR-assisted applications they are receiving.

Collaborate, Coordinate, and Communicate

- *Social Security Administration (SSA) and Disability Determination Services (DDS):* Negotiate a SOAR Process for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) adult SSI/SSDI and child SSI application submission. Identify SSA/DDS SOAR liaisons in local and tribal offices.
- *Medical Providers:* Identify medical providers who can provide physical/psychiatric evaluations and co-sign Medical Summary Reports. Explore using retroactive Medicaid to reimburse for medical evaluations. Set up a process to obtain medical records, free of charge if possible.
- *Other Collaborations:* Think broadly! Include tribal administrators, school leadership, vocational service providers, Tribal Indian Child Welfare departments, tribal family services, tribal economic support, housing agencies, jails/prisons, Veteran services, and representative payee services.

Track and Report Outcomes

- Identify tracking mechanism to be used—e.g., SOAR Online Application Tracking System.
- Establish procedures for the reporting of outcomes by communities and SOAR-trained staff.
- Report outcomes to the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center as requested.

Fund and Sustain

- Use your outcomes to expand or sustain your SOAR initiative.
- Educate stakeholders, influential tribal leaders, tribal social service leadership, tribal grant offices, and potential funders about the impact SOAR has in your tribal community. Share success stories; report on cost savings (reimbursement/recoupment totals).
- Explore various funding sources. Consider use of federal funds (e.g., PATH, CABHI, Systems of Care); pool and/or realign existing resources; explore AI/AN organizations and community foundations, United Way, corporations, and hospital collaborations; and investigate criminal or juvenile justice funding to implement SOAR in jails, prisons, or detention facilities.