

SOAR Enhances Recovery by Supporting Our Veterans

What is the Need?

In January 2020, 37,252 Veterans were homeless on a single night during the Point in Time (PIT) count. In January 2021, 19,750 Veterans were experiencing sheltered homelessness, staying in emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing. An unsheltered count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Half of Veterans experiencing homelessness have serious mental illness and over half have other health issues.

High prevalence of traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and sexual trauma among Veterans experiencing homelessness contributes to difficulty in maintaining employment and housing.

Importance of SSI/SSDI for Veterans and their Families

Income

Veterans can receive SSI/SSDI in conjunction with, or as an alternative to, VA disability benefits and employment. Children in Veteran households who have serious mental or physical health conditions and have low income and resources may be eligible for SSI.

Health Insurance

Veterans can use Medicaid and Medicare health benefits that come with SSI/SSDI to supplement VA health services.

Housing Stability

The right combination of income supports (SSA benefits, VA benefits, employment) can help Veterans obtain and maintain housing stability.

Federal Partnerships Supporting SOAR

In February 2022, the VA released an updated memorandum that directed VA staff working in homeless programs to identify a plan for connecting eligible Veterans to SSI/SSDI using the SOAR model. This memo supports ongoing federal efforts between the VA and SSA to allow federal VA staff to serve as SSA-1696 Appointed Representatives, gather required documentation, and complete SSI/SSDI applications using the SOAR model. VA staff using the SOAR model should first complete the SOAR Online Course and connect with their state and local SOAR leads.

SSA Fast Track Programs

100% Permanent & Total Veterans Initiative and Wounded Warriors

2019 Outcomes: Veterans

- 4,000 Veterans have been assisted with their applications using SOAR
- In the June 2019 VA, HUD, and United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Community Planning Survey, 202 out of 366 respondents (55 percent) indicated that they are using the SOAR model in their HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System to help

Veterans with disabling conditions access SSI/SSDI. An additional 77 respondents (21 percent) are in the process of implementing the SOAR model to serve Veterans

- The notice of funding for SSVF grantees includes the expectation that grantees will use the SOAR program through community linkages or staff training

VA Program Partners and Other National Veteran Programs

- Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
- Housing and Urban Development- Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
- VA Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACT)
- U.S. Department of Labor- Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS)
- Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)
- Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Programs
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV)
- Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program
- Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)
- Homeless Veteran's Reintegration Program (HVRP)
- Veterans Health Administration Homeless Programs Office

SOAR and VA Products

- [SSVF and SOAR Integration Toolkit](#)
- [SSI/SSDI and Employment Benefit/Income Calculators](#)
- [Connecting Veterans to Social Security Disability Benefits: A Key Component in Ending Veteran Homelessness](#)
- [SOAR Works to End Veteran Homelessness: VA Caseworker's Guide](#)
- [SSA and VA disability Benefits: Tips for Veterans](#)

For more information:

soar@prainc.com

(518) 439-7415

<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/>