

Peers Can Enhance the SOAR Process at Every Intercept!



Identify Applicants

Assist with SSI/SSDI Applications

Obtain Medical Records, Evaluations & Co-signatures on MSRs

Provide Systems-Level Support

Support Resiliency and Recovery

* Identify individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness who have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder, and are unable to work at a substantial gainful level.

* Assist with SSI/SSDI applications by completing supportive tasks and/or completing full applications if role appropriate. Peer Workers build trust and provide a level of empathy during the process based on their own lived experiences and are nonjudgmental advocates for the applicants.

* Establish relationships with community partners to assist in obtaining appropriate medical records, evaluations, and co-signatures on Medical Summary Reports.

* Provide support in advocating for the promotion of community health by collaborating with relevant community partners to facilitate access to health and social services (including access to mainstream benefits).

* Work to encourage resiliency and recovery beyond the SOAR application process.

Peer Workers can:

- Provide education and awareness of SOAR initiatives in the community
- Share lived experiences to inspire hope of how benefits acquisition can be beneficial to recovery
- Provide outreach services to identify appropriate SOAR candidates
- Gather information through intakes to facilitate efficient SOAR referral and assistance
- Support applicants in gathering identifying documents (e.g., IDs, Social Security cards, birth certificates, etc.)

Peer Workers can:

- Complete the SOAR Online Course
- Complete SSI/SSDI applications using the SOAR model (if role appropriate)
- Provide relationship-building across the application process (using active listening, supporting applicants in scheduling and keeping appointments, checking in with applicants who have not been in recent contact, accompanying applicants to medical appointments, and assisting with advocacy if necessary)
- Create applicant files, track progress on the files
- Maintain progress notes that highlight the applicant's functional impairments
- Share lived expertise to help support applicants through the Medical Summary Report interview and process
- Collaborate with the SSA and DDS offices to bridge any communication gaps

Peer Workers can:

- Provide collateral information on limitations in the applicant's functioning and supports that they have provided to the individual
- Assist with collecting medical evidence, such as hospital or clinic records and psychiatric evaluations, and arrange for additional medical appointments or testing as needed
- Build collaborative relationships with other treating medical providers
- Serve as a bridge in explaining the Medical Summary Report and the importance of obtaining co-signatures

Peer Workers can:

- Utilize unique role to provide education/training on best practices for engaging SOAR applicants
- Participate in local and state SOAR Steering Committees
- Connect with Statewide Peer Networks to share knowledge and information on SOAR
- Advocate for the promotion and protection of health by collaborating with community providers to facilitate access to health and social services
- Track outcomes and/or support other data-sharing opportunities (e.g., follow-up surveys/contacts)

Peer Workers can:

- Continue to serve as an example of recovery for others
- Link applicants with further housing, employment, and education resources
- Provide information/education on SSA work incentives for interested applicants
- Assist with other supportive service needs, such as food assistance and other mainstream benefits for which the individual may qualify

The SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center 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.

Connect with your state SOAR contacts: <https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/directory>

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