

Providing High-Quality SOAR Services in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Programs

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

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SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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Dorrine Gross
PATH Program Coordinator, SOAR COR
Division of State and Community Systems Development
Center for Mental Health Services

Welcome!

Purpose and Objectives

- Learn about the benefits of including SOAR services in PSH programs.
- Hear about the experiences and best practices from existing PSH programs with SOAR services included.
- Understand Social Security Administration (SSA) guidelines on how living arrangements and housing vouchers affect eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the amount of SSI benefits.

Agenda

Presenters

- Diandra Taylor, National Public Affairs Specialist, Social Security Administration's Office of Communications/Office External Affairs, Baltimore, Maryland
- Tina Tryggestad, SOAR Case Manager and SOAR Local Lead, Couleecap, Inc, LaCrosse, Wisconsin
- Lauren Frederick, MSW, LGSW West Virginia Balance of State Continuum of Care Director, West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness, Bridgeport, West Virginia
- DeeAnn Shaw, Permanent Supportive Housing Case Manager, Clarksburg Harrison Regional Housing Authority, Clarksburg, West Virginia
- Julie Miller, LISW-CP, ACM-SW, Chief Clinical Officer, Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc. (MIRCI), Columbia, South Carolina
- Dianne Denise Miller-Fields, Director of Homeless Outreach and Benefits, Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc. (MIRCI), Columbia, South Carolina
- Olivette Ford, Mental Illness Recovery Center (MIRCI) Board Member, SOAR and Permanent Supportive Housing Beneficiary, MIRCI, Columbia, South Carolina

Questions and Answers

- Facilitated by the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Diandra Taylor, National Public Affairs Specialist, Social Security Administration's Office of Communications/Office External Affairs, Baltimore, Maryland

Understanding Living Arrangements and Housing Vouchers with SSA



Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

What is it?

SSI is a federal program that provides monthly payments to people who have limited income and resources.

Who is it for?

People who are 65 or older, as well as for those of any age, including children, who are blind or who have disabilities and have limited income and resources.

ssa.gov/SSI



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Requirements for Getting SSI

- Your income – money you receive such as wages, Social Security benefits, and pensions. Income also includes such things as food and shelter.
- Your resources – things you own such as real estate, bank accounts, cash, stocks, and bonds.
- Where you live – must live in the U.S., or Northern Mariana Islands. If you're not a U.S. citizen, but you are lawfully residing in the United States, you still may be able to get SSI.



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Requirements for Getting SSI - Eligibility

To be eligible for SSI, you must:

- have limited income and few resources;
- be age 65 or older;
- be totally or partially blind; or
- have a medical condition that keeps you from working and is expected to last at least one year or result in death.

Note: There are different rules for children.



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How to Apply for SSI (Adult)

You can begin the process and complete a large part of your application online!

You may be eligible to complete your application online if you:

- are between the ages of 18 and 65;
- have never been married;
- are a U.S. citizen;
- haven't applied for or received SSI benefits in the past; and
- are applying for Social Security Disability Insurance at the same time as your SSI claim.



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How to Apply for SSI (Under Age 18)

- Visit ssa.gov/ssi/start.html to let us know you want to apply for SSI for a child under age 18;
or
- Schedule an appointment with us. Call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday or contact your local Social Security office;
or
- Begin the process online by completing the Child Disability Report at ssa.gov/childdisabilityreport. A representative will then contact you to complete the application.



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Living Arrangements

Living arrangements are another factor to determine how much SSI a person can get. Benefits may vary depending on where you live:

- In someone else's household
- In an institution – generally \$30/month maximum
- In a group care or board and care facility



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SSI & Homeless

Social Security defines “homeless” as:

A **transient** – an individual with no permanent living arrangement, i.e., no fixed place of residence. A transient is neither a member of a household nor a resident of an institution.

If you are homeless, you can receive your SSI benefits by:

- having them deposited into your personal bank account;
- having your benefits mailed to a third party;
- having a relative or other third party be assigned as your representative payee; or
- having your benefits directed to a Direct Express bank card.



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In Kind Support and Maintenance (ISM)

- Under our current rules, ISM includes food, shelter, or both a person receives – the agency counts ISM as unearned income, which may affect a person’s eligibility or reduce their payment amount.
- Beginning September 30, 2024, the agency will no longer include food in ISM calculations.
- The new policy removes a critical barrier for SSI eligibility due to an applicant’s or recipient’s receipt of informal food assistance from friends, family, and community networks of support.



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Reporting Responsibilities Under SSI

What Things Must You Report To Social Security?

You must report any changes in your status because they may affect your eligibility for SSI and your benefit amount. If you work and get SSI, then you must report your earnings.

When Do You Need To Report?

Report any changes that may affect your SSI as soon as possible and no later than 10 days after the end of the month in which the change occurred.

How Do I Report Wages?

Social Security offers a toll-free automated wage reporting telephone system and a mobile wage reporting application. You can also report your wages through your personal *my* Social Security account.



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What to Report Under SSI

- change of address
- change in living arrangements
- change in earned and unearned income
- change in resources
- death of a spouse or anyone in your household
- change in marital status
- change in citizenship or immigration status
- change in help with living expenses from friends or relatives
- eligibility for other benefits or payments
- admission to or discharge from an institution (i.e. hospital, nursing home, jail, etc.)
- change in school attendance (if under age 22)
- change in legal alien status
- sponsor changes of income, resources, or living arrangements for aliens
- leaving the U.S. for a full calendar month or for 30 consecutive days or more
- an unsatisfied felony or arrest warrant for escape from custody, flight to avoid prosecution or confinement, or flight-escape



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Questions



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Thank You

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Diandra Taylor

Diandra.Taylor@ssa.gov

www.samhsa.gov

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Tina Tryggestad, SOAR Case Manager and SOAR Local Lead, Couleecap, Inc, LaCrosse, Wisconsin

SOAR and Permanent Supportive Housing

Couleecap

- Agency background
- Service district
- Mission & Vision
- Services
 - Community Development
 - Weatherization
 - Food Assistance
 - Housing

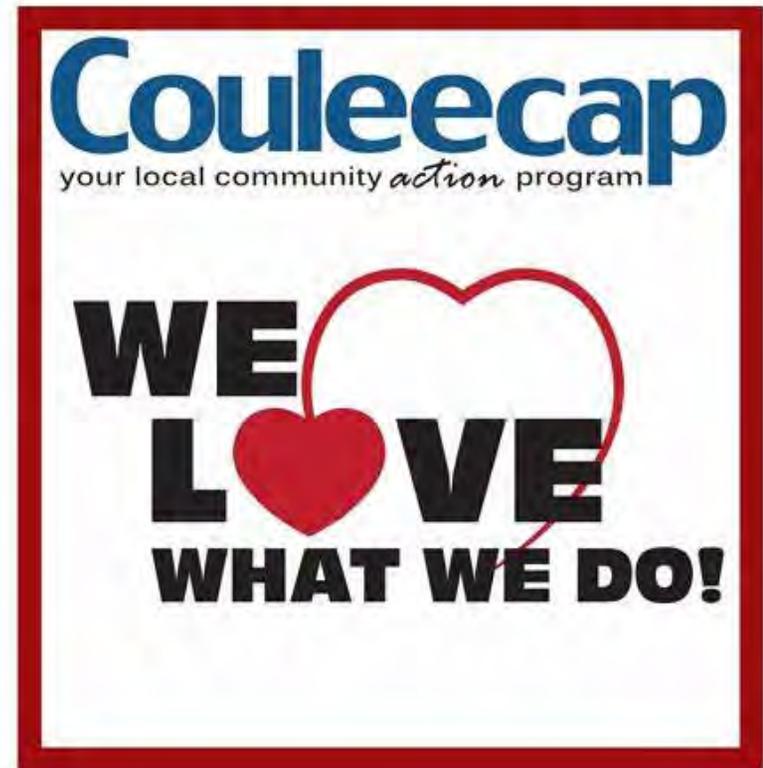


Our Mission

Couleecap fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency, economic development, and social justice. We are **People Helping People**, and every day our actions make a difference in the lives of people and families throughout the Coulee Region.

Housing and Community Services

- Programs
- Coordinated Entry to PSH
- SOAR
 - Internal Collaboration
 - Community Relationships
 - SSA and DDS



How to Access SOAR at Couleecap



[HOME](#)

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S.O.A.R. Program Social Security Outreach, Access, and Recovery

Provides assistance in applying and navigating the application process for Social Security Disability benefits.

Service Area: Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties

Eligibility: Eligible persons must be homeless and have a diagnosed mental illness.

Questions:

Contact [Tina Tryggestad](#)

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Tina Tryggestad

tina.tryggestad@couleecap.org

www.samhsa.gov

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Lauren Frederick, MSW, LGSW, West Virginia Balance of State Continuum of Care
Director, West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness, Bridgeport, West Virginia
DeeAnn Shaw, Permanent Supportive Housing Case Manager, Clarksburg Harrison
Regional Housing Authority, Clarksburg, West Virginia

SOARing in West Virginia

West Virginia SOAR Program: About Us

- Lauren Frederick, Continuum of Care Director, WV Coalition to End Homelessness and SOAR State Lead
 - I live in Bridgeport, West Virginia.
 - I have worked in homeless services for 10 years.
 - I began this work as a street outreach worker.
 - I believe housing first (not housing only) works!
- DeeAnn Shaw, Permanent Supportive Housing/Case Manager, Clarksburg Harrison Regional Housing Authority
 - I live in Salem, West Virginia.
 - SOAR Case Manager since November of 2019.
 - I graduated from Fairmont State College May 13th 2000.
 - I have been a case manager for various agencies for 24 years, and before that, I was a behavioral health technician.

Lauren: West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness

Administrative Duties

- Advocacy and community education on best practices
- SOAR State Lead
- Continuum of Care (CoC) Lead
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Lead
- Coordinated Entry Systems Lead
- Homelessness Management Information System Lead (statewide contract holder)

Direct Services

- Advocacy and community education on best practices
- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Coordinated Entry (Client Intake Line)
- Street Outreach
- Transition age youth (18-24 years old) specific housing programs
- Mobile Recovery services
- Diversion from the homeless services system
- Employment Navigation (in specific regions)
- Landlord Liaison program
- Hospital Liaison program (in specific regions)

SOARing in West Virginia

- Building partnership in vast rural regions
 - Public Housing Authorities, Hospitals, Community Mental Providers, SSA, DDS
- SOAR in the West Virginia Balance of State CoC is now tied to performance of CoC and YHDP funded projects
- Monthly SOAR practitioner meetings

DeeAnn: Clarksburg Harrison Regional Housing Authority

Clarksburg-Harrison Regional Housing Authority is a public agency whose business is to:

Ensure that safe, quality affordable housing opportunities exist for families of low to moderate income.

Break the poverty cycle by serving as a catalyst for our residents to become economically self-sufficient.

Create and maintain meaningful partnerships to maximize available community resources for our residents.

Efficiently and effectively meet federal, state, and local mandates



Incorporating SOAR into PSH Programming



Permanent Supportive Housing

Dedicated to Housing First
Serving Chronically Homeless (and disabled) persons.

Housing First is a proven method of ending all types of homelessness and is the most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness. Housing First offers individuals and families experiencing homelessness mediate access to permanent affordable or supportive housing.

Incorporating SOAR into PSH Programming

- Permanent supportive housing is an intervention that combines affordable housing assistance and case management to address the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment, and employment services.
- If employment services are not the most appropriate, they may receive help applying for Social Security Benefits through a SOAR-trained case worker if they choose.
- The goal is to increase access to the disability income benefit administered by the Social Security Administration for eligible adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

DeeAnn's Role as a SOAR Specialist in a PSH Program

- Serve as the appointed representative and complete the applications for both SSI and SSDI.
- Collect medical records from providers who have treated the applicant over the last five years.
- Complete a psychosocial assessment, a functional impairment assessment, and a substance use worksheet.
- Write a comprehensive Medical Summary Report (MSR) that includes psychosocial, treatment, and functional information.
- Conduct ongoing outreach and engagement with the individual to stay connected throughout the process
- Work with the individual to obtain other needed services and treatment such as housing, physical and mental health care, other support services, food, and clothing.
- Discuss with the applicant whether a Representative Payee will be required and assist with obtaining a reliable one when necessary.
- Support other post-eligibility issues, e.g., financial wellness, vocational goals, medical treatment, SSA updates, etc.

Thank You

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Lauren Frederick

laurenfrederick@wvceh.org

DeeAnn Shaw

dshawchrha@gmail.com

www.samhsa.gov

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Julie Miller, LISW-CP, ACM-SW, Chief Clinical Officer, Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc. (MIRCI), Columbia, South Carolina

Dianne Denise Miller-Fields, Director of Homeless Outreach and Benefits, Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc. (MIRCI), Columbia, South Carolina

MIRCI: The Link to Long Term Stability

The History of Mirci

From the 1960's to Today



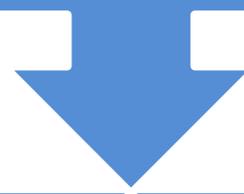
MIRCI

UPHOLDING MENTAL HEALTH

Helping people find a way forward when life is at an impasse.

What does Mirci do?

Mirci works with vulnerable adults aged 17 and up who need immediate and continuing life assistance due to mental illness, specifically, those experiencing and at risk of homelessness.



Our clinical and support programs for older adults with diagnosed mental illnesses help them build healthy, independent lives. And our early intervention and support services for young adults pre-empt larger mental health issues later in life.

Where Do Our Referrals Come From?

- Community Partners
- Hospitals
- Jails/Law Enforcement
- Schools
- Department of Social Services
- Community members/Families
- Self-Referrals

The Journey Through Mirci Services

How do people get connected to Mirci?

– ***There are no wrong entry points to our services.***

1. The journey starts with a member of our outreach team who can access immediate needs.
2. That team then directs potential participants to our services or makes a referral to a more suitable community partner agency.
3. After connecting individuals to resources for immediate essential needs, our medical team then determines the need for psychiatric care for those who qualify for our services, and the outreach team assists with housing options.

Benefits and Behavioral Health

Benefits Specialists and SOAR

- SSI/SSDI Benefits
- Medicaid/Medicare
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Behavioral Health Teams

- Outpatient Team
- Two Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams
- Toward Local Care (TLC) Team

Mirci: By the Numbers in 2023

Outreach

- The Outreach team provided services to over 1,500 individuals in the Midlands of South Carolina
- Over 300 people were enrolled in long-term therapeutic assistance and housing programs

SOAR

- The Benefits Team provided services for obtaining financial assistance and access to medical insurance and decreased food insecurities by submitting over 437 applications
- Over 21 SOAR applications were submitted with 15 approvals

Housing Types

- Scattered Site housing in five apartment communities
- Four Mirci-owned communities
- Transitional Living Home for Young Men (10 beds)
- Transitional Living Home for Young Women is in development (2025)



SOAR and SSA Collaboration: Win-Win!



SOAR-PATHWAY TO PERMANENT
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



SSA/DDS PROCESS –DECREASING
BARRIERS TO INCREASE BENEFITS

A Conversation
with Olivette
Ford,
MIRCI Board
Member and PSH
Resident

“How PSH helped
me connect to SSDI
and other benefits
utilizing SOAR.”

mIRCI

UPHOLDING MENTAL HEALTH

Thank You

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Julie Miller

JMiller@Mirci.org

Dianne Miller-Fields

dmillerfields@mirci.org

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Questions and Answers



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Additional Resources for PSH

- [HUD Exchange: Permanent Supportive Housing](#)
- [National Healthcare for the Homeless Council](#)
- [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- [SSA Information Related to Living Arrangements and In-Kind Support and Maintenance](#)

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<https://bit.ly/SOAReNews>

(Link is case sensitive)



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