



2022 SAMHSA SOAR JULY E-NEWS

Demonstrate SOAR Impact: Submit Your Outcomes

EVERY PERSON COUNTS

SOAR OUTCOMES COLLECTION

Report your SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications with decisions between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, in OAT!



The SAMHSA SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is working with SOAR providers across the country to collect 2022 SOAR outcomes! We are counting SOAR-assisted Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications with decisions received between July 1, 2021, and

June 30, 2022. Report your outcomes in the SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) system to demonstrate the power of the SOAR model. If you have questions, please reach out to your SOAR Liaison to help you through the process!

[Enter Your Outcomes Today!](#)

July Highlights



Appreciating Caroline Bolas

We want to take this time to wish farewell to Caroline Bolas, who served as the Maryland SOAR State Team Lead for the past 7 years and is now moving to a new position. Caroline's journey with SOAR started 5 years prior to her state leadership in 2010. She attended the Stepping Stones to Recovery Train-the-Trainer event in May 2010, the SOAR Leadership Academy in June 2017, the SOAR for Children Leadership Academy in January 2019, and the State Team Lead Leadership Conferences in 2018 and 2022 where she presented about her statewide initiative.

She served on the SAMHSA SOAR Expert Panel from its inception in 2015 and presented on several national webinars. We thank Caroline for her incredible contribution to SOAR nationwide. Her leadership, innovation, and mentorship to other SOAR Leads have made a lasting impact on SOAR. Her carefully considered ideas and thoughtful additions to the SAMHSA SOAR Expert Panel improved our work year after year. She will be greatly missed in the day-to-day work, but we know she will continue to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities in her new role.

Most notably, Caroline made a huge impact on SOAR in Maryland. Marian Bland, Director, Clinical Services, Adults and Older Adults with the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration shared her reflections on working with Caroline.

[Read More](#)

Equity Spotlight

The SAMSHA SOAR TA Center invites you to join us in taking time out to acknowledge the month of July as both BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month and Disability Pride Month. Among both BIPOC (which stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color) and disabled communities, people have faced discrimination and unjust practices. BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month recognizes the challenges and mental health needs of historically oppressed BIPOC people in the United States. Disability Pride Month celebrates people with disabilities and their contributions to the world.

As we acknowledge the history that contributes to the experience of ongoing discrimination, oppression, and inequity in both BIPOC and disabled communities, join our effort to address the systemic discrepancies in available resources and outcomes and to promote the quality of and access to care for everyone we serve in our SOAR work.

To learn more, please check out these resources:

- [Overview Of Mental Health Issues In Multiracial Communities](#) | Mental Health America
- [Addressing Mental Health in the Black Community](#) | Columbia University Department of Psychiatry
- [7 Disabled Books To Read To Celebrate Disability Pride Month This July](#) | The Rolling Explorer
- [Celebrating Disability Pride Month](#) | American Foundation for the Blind

See How SOAR Works

Healthcare for Homeless Veterans in Las Vegas

As the sole SOAR practitioner at the Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program here in North Las Vegas, I work with Veterans experiencing homelessness who have disabling conditions and struggle to find and maintain employment as a result. SOAR can help financially lift eligible Veterans out of poverty, supplementing their monthly income so they can pay rent on their own and utilize community resources.

Veterans who may be eligible for SSI/SSDI are referred to me upon visiting the walk-in clinic for people experiencing homelessness. Veterans will walk in off the street and can be housed the same day in one of our homelessness programs, such as Salvation Army, U.S. Vets, and HELP. If the social worker assisting them identifies that they have a disability and are unable to work at a substantial gainful level, they are referred to me, and I conduct an initial assessment. I then help them collect medical documents and assist with the SSI/SSDI application process. I continue with case management for them while SSA is reviewing the application. I also assist in taking them to medical appointments scheduled by DDS, and I keep tabs on the application's status, to ensure accurate processing.

Since the onset of the pandemic, which made utilizing Social Security offices and resources difficult, we were still able to get 17 Veterans approved for SSI/SSDI through SOAR. Veterans have expressed extreme gratitude—without SOAR assistance, many could have been discouraged by the application process, including a higher likelihood of an unnecessary rejection, and might have lost out on benefits and several thousands of dollars in back pay.

Katie Zimmer, LSW, MSW, SOAR Social Worker, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans, VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System



Secure Email Partnership With SSA

Establishing a secure email or data exchange partnership with SSA is a great way to strengthen your community or agency's communication with SSA. You may be wondering, what is a secure email/data partnership? Great question!

A data exchange is primarily a one- or two-way electronic sharing of personally identifiable information (PII) with a government or private entity/agency. For the purposes of SOAR, it would allow an agency to email case-specific documents, such as a completed application packet, medical records, or a Medical Summary Report directly to SSA. It also allows for email communication between the SOAR caseworker and the DDS examiner assigned to the claim.

Ohio is one of the states that have been able to successfully establish a secure email partnership and is a great example of the process and its advantages! Agencies that fall within a given field office's catchment area are assigned a specific contact with SSA to contact to establish the partnership. Being able to electronically communicate with SSA has greatly increased the speed and efficiency of the SOAR application process!

If you are interested in moving forward, reach out to your existing SSA contacts or your [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison](#) for further guidance.



SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call

July 12, 2022, 1:00–2:00 p.m. ET

[Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar](#)

Sharing Our Successes



We love hearing from our committed SOAR Specialists, Local Leads, and State Leads about the difference that SOAR is making in the lives of applicants around the country. The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is seeking SOAR success stories to feature in upcoming issues of our monthly SOAR e-newsletter. Do you have an applicant success story, a spotlight on collaboration, or a shoutout to a hardworking SOAR Specialist you'd like to share with us? Submit it to the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, and your story could be featured in our next issue!

[**Submit Your SOAR Success**](#)

SSA Revises POMS for Presumptive Disability and Presumptive Blindness

On April 14, 2022, SSA revised their internal policies, known as the Program Operations Manual System (POMS), for Presumptive Disability and Presumptive Blindness (PD/PB). SSA modified the POMS language to potentially make it easier for and to encourage adjudicators to make PD or PB findings for SSI claims when appropriate. SSA also added four categories to consider as having potential for a PD finding. If you have any questions, please contact OEA.Net.Post@ssa.gov.

Partner Updates

New Online Course From the Homeless and Housing Resource Center (HHRC): Introduction to Treatment Models and Engagement

This course is available at no cost to the general public and provides foundational-level information about treatment models and engagement strategies that support individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness who have serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, substance use disorders, or co-occurring disorders. This course consists of four chapters, each of which includes a series of articles and opportunities to apply knowledge through journaling and quizzes. It is estimated to take approximately 3 hours to complete the course, and the course has been accredited for 3 CEUs by the National Association of Social Workers. Participants can work at their own pace, starting and stopping as they wish.

Partner Webinars From HHRC

Supporting Resiliency in Housing and Health Professionals

July 15, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

Join HHRC for this webinar to learn about promoting self-care and resiliency among staff. Hear from subject-matter experts on organizational well-being as they share tools and resources to support supervisors in engaging in their own self-care and encouraging it among supervisees.

Office Hours: Supporting Resiliency in Housing and Health Professionals

July 22, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

As a follow-up to the HHRC webinar on July 15, the presenters will host an Office Hours session to answer questions about promoting self-care and resiliency among staff. Participants will be encouraged to submit questions to speakers in advance of the session.

More From SOAR



Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Please [submit it to the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center!](#)



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The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

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