

October 12, 2017

Dear Continuum of Care Director:

On behalf of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), I am pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoCs) that have not participated in the federally sponsored SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Project.

SAMHSA's SOAR program assists states and localities to expedite access to the Social Security Administration's (SSA) disability programs -- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) -- for persons who are experiencing or at risk for homelessness and who have a mental illness, a co-occurring substance use disorder or other serious medical condition. Currently, all 50 states participate in the federally sponsored SOAR program. SOAR outcomes for 2016 are attached to this letter.

We are inviting CoCs to submit a brief, 3-5 page application to participate in this SOAR planning and technical assistance opportunity. **Only one application per CoC will be accepted. The application must be from the CoC or someone designated by the CoC to respond to this RFA.** We expect that up to five (5) CoCs will be selected.

This federally sponsored SOAR technical assistance opportunity includes four components:

- A one-day implementation meeting facilitated by the SOAR TA Center in conjunction with the designated Local Lead. At this forum, the critical components of SOAR will be described and participants will develop an action plan for establishing the community infrastructure and collaborations needed to implement the SOAR process and effect systems change. Participants include stakeholders in housing and homelessness services who will continue to meet to ensure implementation of SOAR. Planning must be coordinated with the state's existing SOAR efforts and SOAR State Team Lead.
- The SOAR Local Lead's attendance at a Leadership Academy where they will learn how to establish steering committees, mentor new trainees, conduct SOAR Fundamentals refresher trainings and track outcomes. There is no registration fee and travel/per diem will be covered as part of this award.
- Access to the SOAR Online Course, assistance with planning an initial SOAR Fundamentals training in your region, and on-going technical assistance with the implementation of SOAR.
- Access to the SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) program, which allows participants to electronically enter, save, and report on the outcome of applications submitted to SSA using the SOAR process.

To apply, the CoC or its designee must submit a brief 3-5 page narrative describing how it will address the requirements below, as well as how participation in this project will be linked to assisting people experiencing homelessness to access permanent housing. Please include information about collaborations with American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN), Health Care for the Homeless (HCH), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Programs, employment, transition age youth and peer/consumer-run organizations.

1. Designate a Local Lead who is in a leadership position and is willing to commit the time to ensure implementation of SOAR, by facilitating regular steering committee meetings, mentoring new trainees, conducting SOAR refresher trainings and tracking outcomes.
2. Conduct an environmental scan. Quantify both the need in your community and the community's capacity to address that need. Here are some data sources to support your response. Feel free to use others: [HUD Point in Time Counts](#) and [Census Poverty Data](#)
3. Identify community-based provider agencies willing to commit staff to successfully complete the SOAR Online Course, assist with SSI/SSDI applications using the SOAR process, and track outcomes.
4. Describe specific strategies for conducting outcome tracking. CoCs are encouraged to utilize the SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) program described in the attached brochure and on the SOAR OAT website (<https://soartrack.prainc.com/>) to collect and report application results.
5. Demonstrate a CoC-wide collaborative commitment to develop and implement an action plan for increasing access to SSI/SSDI benefits, including a regular SOAR steering committee to address further implementation and issues that may arise.
6. Demonstrate logistical support for SOAR meetings. Such support might include training space, publicity, registration, and ancillary materials. (The SOAR Online Course is provided by SAMHSA at no charge.)
7. Describe how the CoC's SOAR project lead will coordinate with the SOAR State Team Lead, enhance the state's existing SOAR efforts, integrate the use of the state's SOAR Process (if one is in place), and deliver outcomes to the SOAR TA Center annually. Communication with the SOAR State Team Lead is strongly recommended prior to submission of an application for SOAR TA. The SOAR State Team Lead can be found at <https://soarworks.prainc.com/directory>. Use the interactive map to find your state's SOAR Team Lead.
8. Describe any ongoing collaborative work that is either currently linked to increasing access to SSI/SSDI or could easily incorporate such work. Include any prior collaborative work between the CoC and SSA, the state's Disability Determination Service (DDS), medical providers, and homeless service providers. Describe how SOAR can help enhance that work. The lack of prior collaborative work will not count against the application as long as there is a plan for implementing such collaboration.

The timeline for participation in this round of SOAR technical assistance is as follows:

- Applications for SOAR technical assistance are **due November 17, 2017**.
- Kick-off call to answer questions about the application will be held on **October 24 at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time**:
 - Log-in: <https://prainc.adobeconnect.com/soarworks>
 - Conference Line: (866) 805-9853
 - Passcode: 185-133-8729
- Selections and notifications will occur by December 8, 2017.
- Planning calls will be held with selected CoCs in early January 2018.
- The SOAR Local Lead will attend a Leadership Academy on either February 6-8, 2018 or April 24-26, 2018.
- The one-day implementation meeting must be held prior to September 1, 2018.
- On-going technical assistance and monitoring of your implementation plans and assistance to help you report on SOAR outcomes will be available.

Please respond by **October 24, 2017** (requested, not required) to indicate whether your CoC is interested in submitting an application to participate in SOAR. Send your response to Kristin Lupfer, Project Director, SOAR Technical Assistance Center, via e-mail at klupfer@prainc.com. Questions about the application process or the SOAR TA Project in general should be directed to Kristin Lupfer. She can be reached by phone at (518) 439-7415, ext. 5262 or by e-mail as noted above. Applications must be submitted electronically via e-mail to Ms. Lupfer and are due no later than 5:00 p.m. Pacific on **November 17, 2017**.

Sincerely,



Bobby Grace
SOAR Project Officer
Homeless Programs Branch
Center for Mental Health Services

Attachments: SOAR Overview
SOAR 2016 Outcomes
Best Practices for State and Local Initiatives
Leadership Academy Overview
Best Practices for Assisting Applicants
Learning Objectives for the SOAR Online Curriculum
SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) program brochure

cc: SOAR State Team Leads