

October 23, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

SAMHSA's SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (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 of homelessness and who have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder or other serious medical condition. To connect individuals leaving correctional facilities or involved in criminal justice (CJ) systems or specialty courts for needed treatment, it is critical to leverage state and federal investments such as SSI and SSDI. These federal programs can promote access to services that increase the likelihood of post release success and contribute to the reduction in recidivism. Currently, all 50 states and the District of Columbia participate in the federally sponsored SOAR program and we are working to expand SOAR within agencies, facilities and court systems interested in innovative ways to address the needs of people that are involved in the justice system.

On behalf of SAMHSA, I am pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications from agencies and institutions that provide services to individuals that are involved in the criminal justice system. Eligible candidates are those that are not currently implementing SOAR to address the needs of potential applicants that may be involved in the criminal justice system.

We are inviting criminal justice partners to submit a brief application to participate in this SOAR planning and technical assistance opportunity. **Only one application per facility will be accepted. The application must be from Leadership or someone designated by Leadership to respond to this RFA.** We expect to select up to five (5) grantees.

This federally-sponsored SOAR TA opportunity includes four components:

1. A one-day implementation meeting facilitated by the SOAR TA Center in conjunction with the designated **SOAR Criminal Justice (CJ) Lead**.
 - At this implementation meeting, the critical components of SOAR will be described and participants will develop an action plan for establishing the infrastructure and collaborations needed to assist justice involved applicants that will affect systems change and result in application submissions using the SOAR model.
 - Participants include stakeholders that provide services to people involved in the justice system, (e.g. housing and homelessness service providers), 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.
2. The SOAR CJ Lead's attendance at a SOAR Leadership Academy where he/she will learn how to establish steering committees; mentor new trainees; conduct SOAR Online Course cohort trainings, Review Sessions, and supplemental trainings; and track outcomes. There is no registration fee and travel/per diem will be covered.
3. Access to the SOAR Online Course, assistance with planning SOAR Online Course

Cohort trainings and Review Sessions, and on-going technical assistance with the implementation of SOAR.

4. 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 SOAR CJ Lead or his/her designee must submit a brief **3-5** page narrative describing how they will address the requirements below, as well as how participation in this project will be linked to assisting individuals that are involved in the criminal justice system.

The narrative should include information on the following sections:

1. **SOAR Criminal Justice (CJ) Lead:** Designate a lead who is in a leadership position and is willing to commit the time to ensure SOAR implementation and application submissions for eligible persons involved in the criminal justice system by facilitating regular stakeholder meetings, mentoring new trainees, conducting SOAR Online Course Cohort trainings and Review Sessions, and tracking outcomes.
2. **Application Rationale:** Describe a rationale for applying. What is the current agency/institutional need and how will SOAR support your re-entry efforts and/or contribute to the reduction of recidivism?
3. **SOAR providers:** Identify staff to successfully complete the SOAR Online Course, assist with SSI/SSDI applications using the SOAR model, and track outcomes. These staff members must be afforded the time and resources to complete the training.
4. **Outcome strategy:** Describe specific strategies for conducting outcome tracking. Participants 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. **Commitment to Plan:** Demonstrate a facility-wide collaborative commitment to develop and implement an action plan for increasing access to SSI/SSDI benefits, including a regular SOAR stakeholder committee meeting to address further implementation and issues that may arise.
6. **Logistical support:** 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. **Coordination:** Describe how the SOAR CJ 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 prior to submission of an application for SOAR TA is strongly recommended. The SOAR State Team Lead can be found at <http://soarworks.prainc.com/directory>.
8. **Collaboration:** Describe any ongoing collaborative work that is either currently linked to increasing access to SSI/SSDI or could easily incorporate such work. Include prior collaborative work between the Social Security Administration (SSA), the state's Disability Determination Service (DDS), homeless service providers as well as information about collaborations with jails or departments of corrections, medical treatment providers and medical records departments, community reentry specialists and specialty courts. 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.

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9. **Funding and sustainability:** Describe funding opportunities to sustain SOAR implementation. Facilities and agencies can consider reallocating existing resources or leveraging resources provided by local university interns and volunteers within the community as part of their funding and sustainability plan.
 10. **Briefly describe your vision for implementation:** Describe how you would like to approach SOAR implementation. Where would you like to start? Are you considering a pilot? What referral sources are being considered? Will SOAR providers be positioned within the criminal justice setting or would in-reach services be considered?

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

- Kick-off call to answer questions about the application will be held on **November 14, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time:**
 - Log-in: <https://prainc.adobeconnect.com/soarcj>
 - Conference Line: (866) 805-9853 / Passcode: 515-467-7330
- Applications for SOAR CJ participation are due **December 21, 2018.**
- Notifications will occur by **January 11, 2019.**
- The first planning call will be held with selected Agencies/Facilities in February.
- The SOAR local lead will attend a Leadership Academy on **March 19-21, 2019** in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- The one-day planning forum must be held prior to **June 28, 2019.**
- 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 **November 20, 2018** (requested, not required) to indicate whether your agency/facility is interested in submitting an application to participate in SOAR. Send your response to Dazara Ware, Senior Project Associate, SOAR Technical Assistance Center, via e-mail at dware@prainc.com.

Questions about the application process or this SOAR TA opportunity in general should be directed to Dazara Ware. She can be reached by phone at (518) 439-7415, ext. 5260 or by e-mail as noted above. Applications must be submitted electronically via e-mail to Ms. Ware and are due no later than 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on **December 21, 2018.**

Sincerely,



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

Attachments: SOAR Overview
SOAR 2018 Outcomes Infographic
Leadership Academy Overview
CJ Infographic