

Understanding Steps to Completing SOAR-Assisted SSI/SSDI Applications

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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Webinar Instructions

- **Slides/Materials:** <https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/events>*
- **Recording:** Available within 1 week at the above link.
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- **Questions:** Please submit questions using the **Q&A** feature.
- **Accessibility:** ASL interpretation and Live Captioning services are being provided. To show captions click the “CC” icon.
- **Evaluation:** Your browser will redirect you to a survey following the webinar.

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Welcome!

Purpose and Objectives

- Learn how to access and utilize SAMHSA SOAR tools and worksheets that can help you in the SSI/SSDI application process
- Understand why it's important to create and implement an agreed-upon SOAR Process between your SSA and DDS offices
- Discover best practices for getting started with SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications

Agenda

Presenters

- Amanda Starkey, M.A., Project Associate II, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, Policy Research Associates, Troy, New York
- Abigail Kirkman, M.A., Assistant Director of the SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center, Policy Research Associates, Troy, New York
- Sametra Polkah-Toe, LMHC, Project Associate II, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, Policy Research Associates, Troy, New York

Questions and Answers

- Facilitated by the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Standard SOAR Process

- Standardized process for utilizing the SOAR model
- Includes steps to completing an SSI/SSDI application
- Some states or communities have slight variations
- Check with your State Team Lead or SOAR TA Center Liaison to find out if there is a custom SOAR Process in your state or community

The screenshot shows a document titled "Standard SOAR Process" with the subtitle "STEPS TO COMPLETING AN SSI/SSDI APPLICATION USING THE SOAR MODEL". It features the SOAR WORKS and SAMHSA logos at the top. The document provides an overview of the process and details three main steps: Step One: Receive Referral, Step Two: Complete SOAR Intake, and Step Three: Request Records from Treatment Sources. Each step includes a list of specific actions for case workers.

SOAR WORKS **SAMHSA**
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Standard SOAR Process

STEPS TO COMPLETING AN SSI/SSDI APPLICATION USING THE SOAR MODEL

After completing the SOAR Online Course, case workers implementing the SOAR model with SSI/SSDI applications should complete the following steps as part of a standard SOAR workflow. This process is a collaborative effort between the SOAR provider, the Social Security Administration (SSA), and Disability Determination Services (DDS) that enables SOAR case workers to complete the SSI/SSDI application process efficiently and effectively.

Step One: Receive Referral

- Request that external providers use the [SOAR Referral Tool](#) to make referrals.
- Track the referrals received in the [SOAR Referral Tracking Worksheet](#).
- Review the [Identifying SOAR Applicants](#) document and the [SSA's Listview of Impairments](#) to help determine whether the applicant is potentially eligible.
- Contact the potential applicant to complete the [SSA-3288: Consent for Release of Information](#) and medical release forms if records are unavailable from the referring source.
 - Submit the SSA-3288 to SSA to confirm whether there are any prior or pending applications. This can be faxed to an SSA contact or Homeless Coordinator (where available).
 - You may also call SSA with the applicant present at 1-800-772-3212 to gather basic information about pending claims.
- If it is an appropriate referral, schedule an intake meeting.

Step Two: Complete SOAR Intake

- Use the [SOAR Intake Meeting Worksheet](#) to gather information and take notes.
- Have the applicant sign agency releases for all collateral sources, (i.e., family members, employers, etc.).
- Have the applicant sign two release forms for each treatment provider: an agency release ([Sample Agency Authorization for Release of Medical Information](#)) and an [SSA-637: Authorization to Disclose Information to the Social Security Administration](#), signing both releases provides HIPAA compliant "compound authorization" which allows you to gather records and re-release them to SSA.
- Complete and have the applicant sign the [SSA 1696: Appointment of Representative](#). You will not submit this form until the complete application packet is submitted (Step Nine).
- Schedule weekly meetings with the applicant before the end of the SOAR intake meeting.

Step Three: Request Records from Treatment Sources

- Request records from two years prior to the onset of disability (date the applicant last earned [Substantial Gainful Activity \(SGA\)](#)) and any older records that may have information supporting the onset of the applicant's symptoms.
- Send a records request packet to each treatment source:
 - Cover Letter ([Sample Medical Records Request Cover Letter](#))

July 2023 | SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance Center | 1

Using the SOAR Process Resource

- Should only be used after completing the SOAR Online Course
- Complete each step in the order it is presented
- **Live links** to SSA forms
- SOAR Worksheets in **blue**
 - Find in Application Toolbox on SOARWorks!

- Use the *SOAR Initial Meeting Worksheet* to gather information and take notes.
- Have the applicant sign agency releases for all collateral sources, (i.e., family members, employers, etc.).
- Have the applicant sign **two** release forms for each treatment provider: an agency release ([Sample Agency Authorization for Release of Medical Information](#)) **and** an [SSA-827: Authorization to Disclose Information to the Social Security Administration](#). Signing both releases provides HIPAA-compliant “compound authorization” which allows you to gather records and re-release them to SSA.
- Complete and have the applicant sign the [SSA-1696: Appointment of Representative](#). *You will not submit this form until the complete application packet is submitted (Step Nine).*
- Schedule weekly meetings with the applicant before the end of the SOAR intake meeting.

Step One: Receive Referral

- Request that external providers use the **SOAR Referral Tool** to make referrals
- Track the referrals received in the **SOAR Referral Tracking Worksheet**
- Review the **Identifying SOAR Applicants** document and the SSA's Listing of Impairments to help determine whether the applicant is potentially eligible.

Sample SOAR Referral Application
Please complete in full and fax to: (Contact Name) or (Fax #)

Candidate Name: _____ Date of referral: _____
Referring agency: _____ Person making referral: _____
Staff contact number: _____ Email address: _____

Candidate identifying information:
Date of birth: _____ Gender: _____ Pronouns: _____ Race: _____
(Must be within 30 days of 18 years of age, or within 300 days of exiting foster care)
SSN: _____ Education (list grade completed): _____ Marital Status: _____
Current living arrangement (address, street, apt. or room): _____
Employment status: _____ Veteran? _____
Emergency contact name and number: _____

Part A: Homelessness/At-Risk Assessment
Where is the candidate currently living? Check the appropriate selection.

Homeless	"X"	At-Risk for Homelessness	"X"
Outdoors		Doubtful up/over/away	
Shelter		Received eviction notice or has substantial arrears on rent/utility	
Transitional housing		Termination suspension/filing that is go-wait-tenant (Resource Plan statements)	
		Exiting foster care	
		Institution - Hospital, nursing home, etc.	
		Jail	

If homeless, how long has the candidate been homeless: _____ Years and _____ Months
Is the candidate in an institution or jail? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, are they expected to be released within 30 days? _____ Yes _____ No
Were they experiencing homelessness before entering the facility? _____ Yes _____ No
Has the candidate had difficulty maintaining housing? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, please describe: _____

Part B: Current Application for SSA Benefits or Pending Appeal
Has the candidate recently applied for Social Security benefits? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, date of application: _____ Decision on application: _____ Pending _____ Denied
If denied, did the candidate appeal? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, are they waiting on a decision? _____ Yes _____ No
Are they working with a lawyer? _____ Yes _____ No

Identifying SOAR Applicants: Adults

This tool is intended to help case workers identify adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness who may be eligible for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits. While we do not want to discourage anyone from applying for SSA benefits, this tool should help you identify individuals that most need your assistance with the SSA/SSA application.

SSA defines adults as persons 18 years of age or older as well as individuals who are within one month (30-day) for youth who are aging out of the foster care system of their 18th birthday. Individuals aged 65 or over with low income and resources may be eligible for SSD based on age or eligible for retirement benefits based on their work history. Individuals aged 62-64, depending on year of birth, may be eligible for early retirement benefits.

Key Eligibility Criteria: The following 4 characteristics represent key eligibility criteria for SSA disability benefits:

- Applicant has a serious mental illness or exhibits symptoms and/or has various physical illnesses that affects their ability to work at a substantial gainful level (SSA/2025)
- Individuals aged 62-64, depending on year of birth, may be eligible for early retirement benefits.
- Individual is currently exhibiting symptoms of mental illness or has periods with worsening of symptoms that prevent sustainable employment. For example:
 - Psychotic Symptoms (hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thinking/paranoia/behavior)
 - Depressive Symptoms (decreased energy, lack of motivation, suicide attempts)
 - Manic Symptoms (racing thoughts, disorganized thoughts)
 - Anxiety/panic (panic, nervousness)
 - Cognitive Deficits (brain injury, problems with concentration, memory, etc.)
 - History of Trauma (history of abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, etc.)
- Other: _____

For applicants with mental illness, they have marked restrictions in at least 2 of these functional areas, or extreme limitations in one area:

- Interact with others (getting along with others, avoidance, etc.)
- Concentrate, persist, or maintain pace (ie. they relate to the ability to complete tasks)
- Adapt or manage oneself (planning, responding to change, getting realistic goals, etc.)

SSA Recommendations: The following characteristics are not essential, but may strengthen an application

- Applicant is prescribed and takes psychiatric medications and continues to experience symptoms and functional impairment.
- Applicant has observable medical evidence (for at least part of the past 12 months) that corroborates mental illness and medical conditions. Limited medical evidence or large gaps in treatment is normal and acceptable for successful applications. Assess whether the:
 - Applicant's symptoms are severe enough that a one-time examination by a physician would provide clear medical evidence
 - Representation can write a Medical Summary Report that illustrates a link between the applicant's diagnoses and their symptoms and functional impairments
- Applicant is not working or is working below SSA due to medical and/or psychiatric condition(s), not because they cannot find work or were laid off
 - History of failed work attempts (limited and stopped employment due to diagnosed conditions)
 - Long work history, but can no longer work up to SSA (SSA/2025) due to conditions
 - Scattered work history due to conditions and other factors

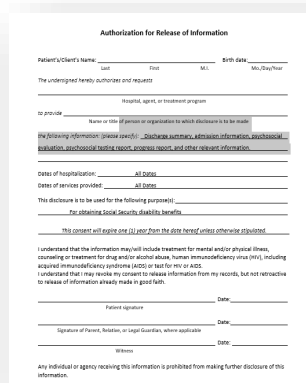
SSA/SSA Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance Center November 2022

Step Two: Complete SOAR Intake

- Use the *SOAR Initial Meeting Worksheet* to gather information and take notes
- Have the applicant sign agency releases for all collateral sources (i.e., family members, employers, etc.)
- Have the applicant sign two release forms for each treatment provider
 - An agency release (*Sample Agency Authorization for Release of Medical Information*)
 - An *SSA-827*



The form is titled "SOAR Initial Meeting Worksheet" and includes the SAMHSA logo. It contains fields for "Name", "DOB", "SSN", "Mailing Address", "Phone Number", "Date Last Contacted", "Date Last Reported Abuse", "Applicant's Relative Name", and "City/State of Birth". There is a section for "What's going on that made it hard for you to work?". At the bottom, there is a "HEALTH INFORMATION" section with two tables: "Medical History" and "Physical Health".



The form is titled "Authorization for Release of Information". It includes fields for "Patient's Client's Name" (Last, First, MI, Birth Date, M/D/Day/Year) and "The undersigned hereby authorizes and requests" (Hospital, agency, or treatment program) to provide information to a "Name or title of person or organization to which disclosure is to be made". The form lists types of information to be released: "Discharge summary, admission information, psychosocial evaluation, psychological testing report, progress report, and other relevant information". It includes fields for "Date of hospitalization" and "Date of service provided". There are checkboxes for "This disclosure is to be used for the following purpose(s):" and "This consent will expire on (or) how long the data hereof expires otherwise explained". It has signature lines for the patient and the provider, and a date field.



The form is titled "SSA-827" and is an "AUTHORIZATION TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (SSA)". It includes fields for "Name", "Address", "City/State/Zip", "Date of Birth", and "Social Security Number". It contains a section for "I authorize the release of information to SSA" and a section for "I do not authorize the release of information to SSA". It includes checkboxes for "I understand that the information may be used for the following purposes:" and "I understand that the information may be used for the following purposes:". It has signature lines for the patient and the provider, and a date field.

Step Two: Complete SOAR Intake (SSA-1696 Video)



**SOAR Online Course:
Completing the
SSA-1696
With SOAR's Dan Coladonato**

[SOAR Online Course: Completing the SSA-1696 \(YouTube\)](#)

Step Three: Request Records from Treatment Sources

- Request records from two years before the onset of disability (date the applicant last earned Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA))
 - Also request older records that may have information supporting the onset of the applicant's symptoms
- Send a records request packet to each treatment source:
 - Cover Letter (*Sample Medical Records Request Cover Letter*)
 - Agency release
 - SSA-827
- Record the submitted requests in the *Medical Records Tracking Spreadsheet*.
 - Follow up after one week for any records not yet received



A medical records tracking worksheet from SOAR and SAMHSA. It includes fields for Applicant Name, SSN, and DOB. Below these fields is a table with columns for Provider, Date requested, Method, Follow-up, and Date received. The first row of the table shows a request from County General Hospital on May 5, 2011, via Fax, with follow-up dates of May 12, 2011 and May 19, 2011, and a date received of May 20, 2011.

Applicant Name:	SSN:	DOB:		
Provider	Date requested	Method	Follow-up	Date received
County General Hospital	May 5, 2011	Fax	May 12, 2011 May 19, 2011	May 20, 2011

Step Three: Request Records (Listings)

- Review all records received. Confirm symptoms correspond with SSA's Listing of Impairments
 - If symptoms are documented in the records, continue to the next step
 - If symptoms are not documented but are easily observed, continue to the next step and recommend a consultative exam in the Medical Summary Report (MSR)
 - If symptoms are not documented and not easily observed, encourage the applicant to seek treatment and revisit the application process when additional supporting records are available

12.08 Personality and impulse-control disorders (see 12.00B7), satisfied by A and B:

- A. Medical documentation of a pervasive pattern of one or more of the following:
1. Distrust and suspiciousness of others;
 2. Detachment from social relationships;
 3. Disregard for and violation of the rights of others;
 4. Instability of interpersonal relationships;
 5. Excessive emotionality and attention seeking;
 6. Feelings of inadequacy;
 7. Excessive need to be taken care of;
 8. Preoccupation with perfectionism and orderliness; or
 9. Recurrent, impulsive, aggressive behavioral outbursts.

AND

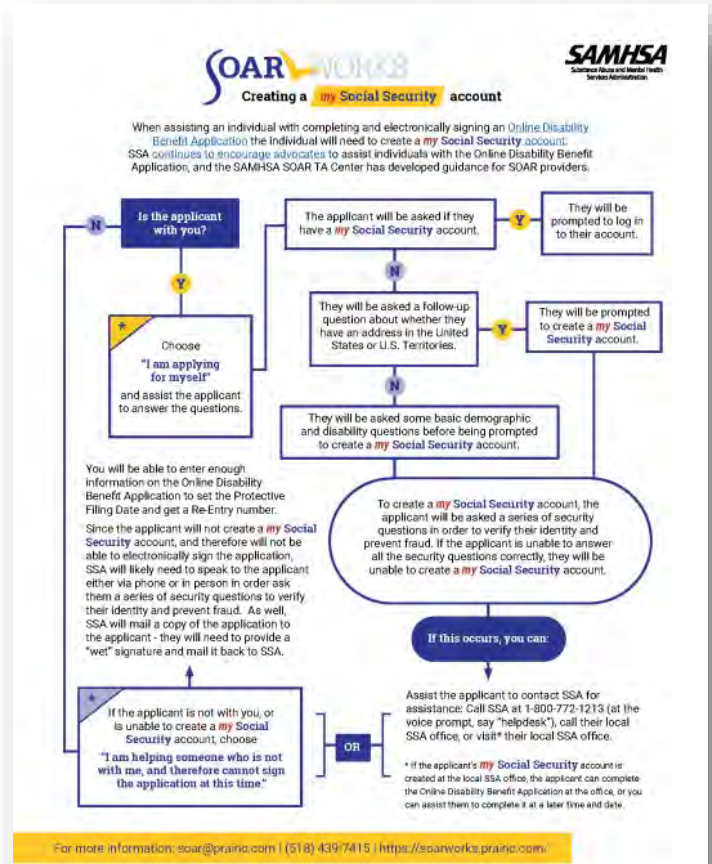
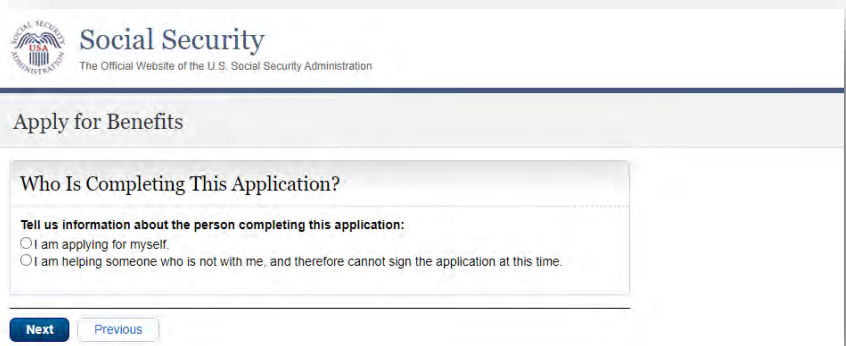
Step Three: Request Records (Videos)



[SOAR Online Course: Using the Blue Book Listings \(YouTube\)](#)
[SOAR Online Course: Collecting Medical Records \(YouTube\)](#)

Step Four: Establishing a Protective Filing Date (PFD)

- Key step to a successful SOAR application!
- Select “I am applying for myself”
 - Assist the applicant with establishing a *my* Social Security Account (via ID.me or Login.gov)
- If the applicant is not able to create a *my* Social Security Account, select “I am helping someone who is not with me, and therefore cannot sign at this time.”



Step Four: Establishing a PFD (cont'd)

- After providing basic information about the applicant, a reentry number will be assigned.
- STOP and EXIT at the reentry number.
- You now have 60 days to complete and submit the application.

Social Security
The Official Website of the U.S. Social Security Administration

Apply for Benefits

1 Provide Background Information 2 Provide Disability Information 3 Sign Medical Release 4 Confirmation

Identification General Other Benefits Remarks Review & Sign

i You must print this page or write down the re-entry number.

Re-entry Number: **36477191**

If something causes you to exit or you choose to save and return at a later time, you must use this number to continue your saved application process.

If you lose this number, you will need to start a new application. Social Security employees will never ask for your re-entry number, or will have access to it. This is to protect your privacy.

Print this page

In this section...

- ✓ Applicant Identification
- ✓ Preparer's Contact Information
- ✓ Contact Information
- ✓ Birth and Citizenship
- Re-entry Number**
- Other SSNs and Names
- Disability

Things you should know about Joan Public's application

We may use **01/24/2014** as the official date of this application. In order to use **01/24/2014**, we must receive the signed application by **07/25/2014** or Joan Public may lose Social Security benefits.

Step Four: Establishing a PFD (Video)



[SOAR Online Course: Establishing a Protective File Date \(PFD\) \(YouTube\)](#)

Step Five: Continue to Gather Supporting Documentation

- *Completed in conjunction with Step Six*
- Meet with the applicant regularly (at least weekly, if not more) over the 60 days.
- Follow up and review medical records as they come in and request more if needed.
- Use the MSR Interview Guide and Template to gather information.
- Begin writing the Medical Summary Report!



Medical Summary Report Interview Guide and Template

The **Medical Summary Report (MSR) Interview Guide** provides sample questions and guidance for gathering information necessary to the SSI/SSDI disability determination process. We do not expect you to ask all the questions in each section. The questions are intended to help you gather all the information you will need to write a Medical Summary Report. For example, if the individual has not been in military service, there is no need to include a military history section. Likewise, if the individual has no legal issues, do not include a legal history section.

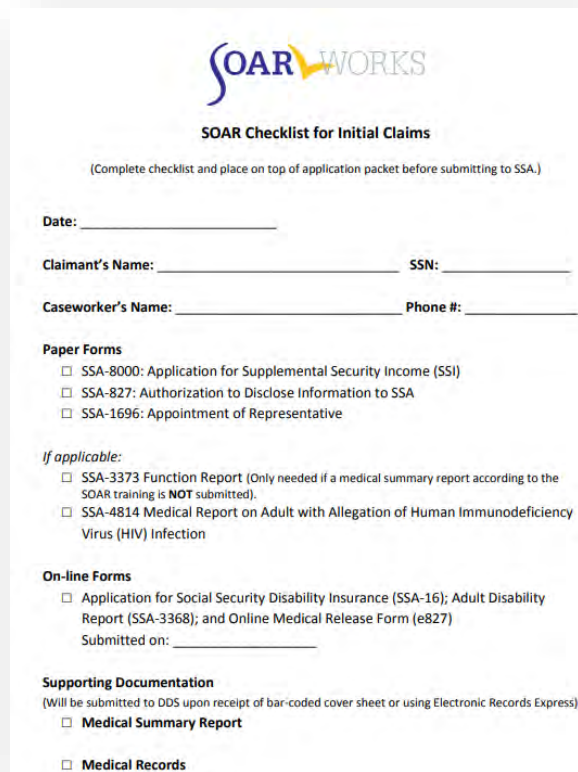
Using this guidance, SOAR-trained providers are able to gather a thorough history in a respectful manner, which in turn helps the Disability Determination Services (DDS) understand the duration of a person's impairment and the effect of their illness(es) on work ability and functioning. The **MSR Template** may be used to compile information in the form of a narrative letter to SSA/DDS as part of the SOAR process. The template has eight main sections, covering the types of information that DDS needs to make a decision. Use the headings provided in the template to organize your MSR.

Using Trauma Informed Interviewing to Reduce Implicit Bias

The SAMSHA SOAR TA Center is working to reduce the influence of implicit bias and encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) during the information gathering process for the Medical Summary Report. This guidance asks you to consider how a potential applicant's racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds may impact their perceptions regarding their disabilities, diagnoses, symptoms, and treatment and to be mindful of how this may impact your opinions/feelings/attitudes towards the client's functioning. The interviewing process can uncover very sensitive topics such as past and current trauma, thus it is important to be sensitive to influences that affect a person's willingness and ability to provide information. How questions are asked during this process can be critical to obtaining the appropriate information.

The overarching question you should be asking yourself is: Does asking this information help provide insight into the applicant's functioning? Is the question being asked in a way that conveys a sense of care and non-judgement?

Step Six: Complete Forms and Documents



SOAR WORKS

SOAR Checklist for Initial Claims

(Complete checklist and place on top of application packet before submitting to SSA.)

Date: _____

Claimant's Name: _____ SSN: _____

Caseworker's Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Paper Forms

- SSA-8000: Application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- SSA-827: Authorization to Disclose Information to SSA
- SSA-1696: Appointment of Representative

If applicable:

- SSA-3373 Function Report (Only needed if a medical summary report according to the SOAR training is **NOT** submitted).
- SSA-4814 Medical Report on Adult with Allegation of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

On-line Forms

- Application for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSA-16); Adult Disability Report (SSA-3368); and Online Medical Release Form (e827)

Submitted on: _____

Supporting Documentation

(Will be submitted to DDS upon receipt of bar-coded cover sheet or using Electronic Records Express)

- Medical Summary Report**
- Medical Records**

- Complete the following forms to be submitted to SSA:
 - SSA-8000: Application for SSI
 - SSA-821: Work History Report (if applicable)
 - SSA-3369: Work History Report (upon request from DDS)
 - SSA-3373: Adult Function Report (upon request from DDS)
- Complete the following as worksheets (to be submitted online):
 - SSA-16: Application for SSDI
 - SSA-3368: Adult Disability Report

Step Seven: Complete the Medical Summary Report

- Finish writing the MSR and send it to your [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison](#) for review
- Send the final MSR to the applicant's treatment provider for review and a co-signature
- Plan for at least a one-week turnaround time for obtaining a provider's co-signature
- A co-signature by an [Acceptable Medical Source](#) (AMS) raises the MSR from "collateral information" to "medical evidence."

A. Medical Sources Who Are AMSs

The following are AMSs:

- Licensed physicians (medical or osteopathic doctors).
- Licensed or certified psychologists at the independent practice level.
- School psychologists, or other licensed or certified individuals with other titles who perform the same function as a school psychologist in a school setting, are AMSs for impairments of intellectual disability, learning disabilities, and borderline intellectual functioning only.
- Licensed optometrists for impairments of visual disorders, or measurement of visual acuity and visual fields only, depending on the scope of practice in the State in which the optometrist practices.
- Licensed podiatrists for impairments of the foot, or foot and ankle only, depending on whether the State in which the podiatrist practices permits the practice of podiatry on the foot only, or the foot and ankle.
- Qualified speech-language pathologists (SLPs) for speech or language impairments only. For this source, "qualified" means that the SLP must be licensed by the State professional licensing agency, or be fully certified by the State education agency in the State that he or she practices, or hold a Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language-Pathology from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association.
- In claims with a filing date on or after March 27, 2017, licensed physician assistants for impairments within the licensed scope of practice only.
- In claims with a filing date on or after March 27, 2017, licensed audiologists for impairments of hearing loss, auditory processing disorders, and balance disorders within the licensed scope of practice only. **NOTE:** Audiologists' scope of practice generally includes evaluation, examination, and treatment of certain balance impairments that result from the audio-vestibular system. However, some impairments involving balance involve several different body systems that are outside the scope of practice for audiologists, such as those involving muscles, bones, joints, vision, nerves, heart and blood vessels.
- In claims with a filing date on or after March 27, 2017, licensed Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN), also known in some States as Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), and Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) for impairments within

Step Seven: Complete the MSR – Worth the Effort

- The overall process of applying for benefits is time-consuming
- Putting forth the initial effort for an earlier, more successful outcome may seem difficult, but it is worth the effort!
- Programs with higher outcomes submit Medical Summary Reports

Step Eight: Complete & Submit the Online Disability Application

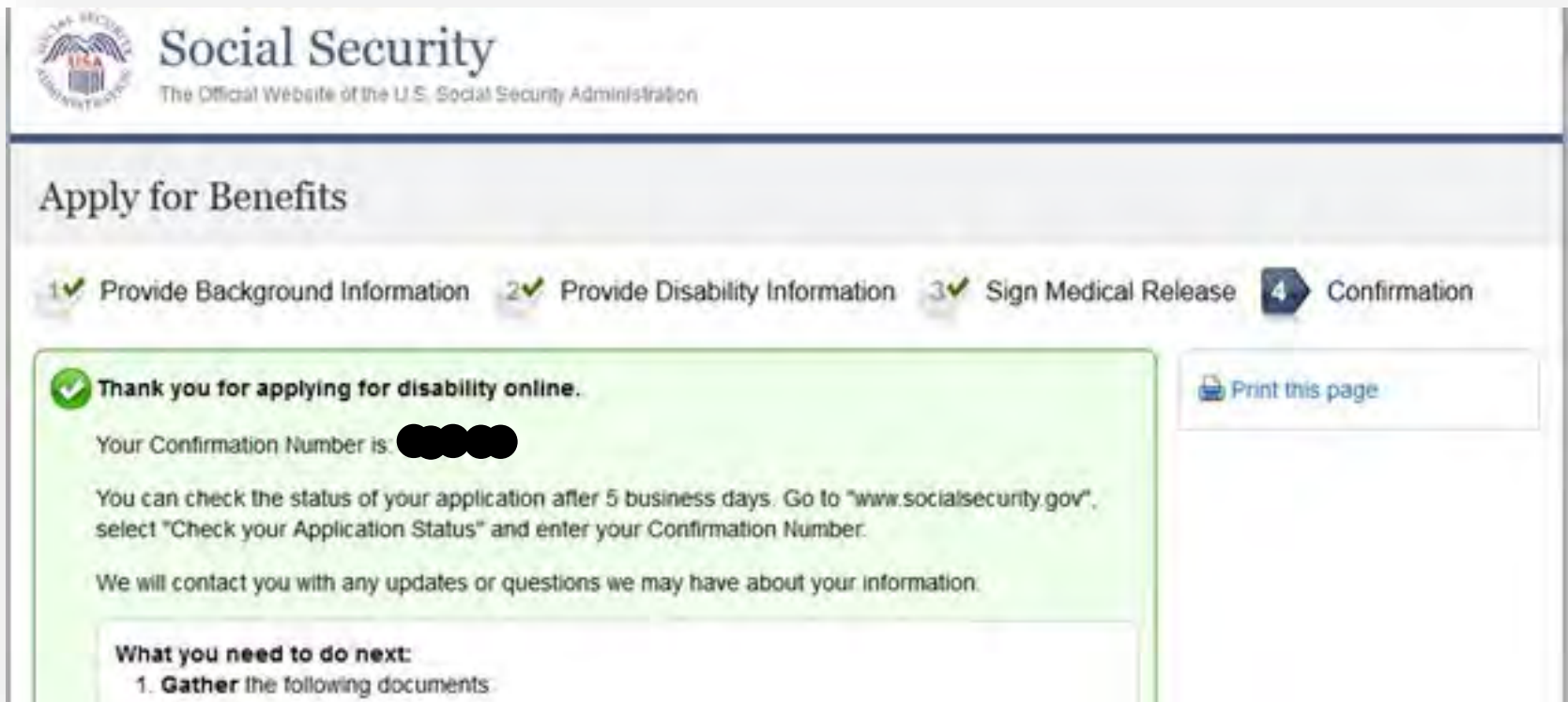
Online Disability Benefits Application

- The online disability application should be completed within 60 days of setting the PFD
- Be sure to use the information gathered on the paper SSA-16/SSA 3368 to complete it.
- Applicant must be present to click the “submit” button

Steps to Completing

- Go to <https://www.ssa.gov/> and click “Apply for Benefits.”
- Select “An Adult (age 18 and over),” “Disability,” and “Supplemental Security Income for Disability.” Click “Learn how to apply” and then “Finish Existing Application.”
- Agree to the Benefits Application Terms of Service, click “Next” and then “Return to Saved Application Process.”
- Enter the applicant’s Social Security Number and the re-entry number you received when you set the PFD

Step Eight: Submit the Online Disability App




The screenshot shows the Social Security Administration's website. At the top left is the SSA logo and the text "Social Security The Official Website of the U.S. Social Security Administration". Below this is a header "Apply for Benefits". A progress bar shows four steps: 1. Provide Background Information (checked), 2. Provide Disability Information (checked), 3. Sign Medical Release (checked), and 4. Confirmation (active). A green box contains a confirmation message: "Thank you for applying for disability online." followed by "Your Confirmation Number is: [REDACTED]". Below this, it says "You can check the status of your application after 5 business days. Go to 'www.socialsecurity.gov', select 'Check your Application Status' and enter your Confirmation Number." and "We will contact you with any updates or questions we may have about your information." A "Print this page" button is visible on the right. At the bottom left of the green box, it says "What you need to do next: 1. Gather the following documents:".

Step Nine: Submit the Paper Application Packet

- Submit the complete paper packet no more than two days after submitting the Online Disability Benefits Application
- Submit via the method of your local field office (In person, Mail, Drop box etc.)

A Complete SOAR Packet

1.  *SOAR Checklist for Initial Claims* (used as a cover sheet)
2. SSA-1696: Appointment of Representative form
3. SSA-827: Authorization to Disclose Information to SSA
4. SSA-8000: Application for SSI
5. SSA-16: SSDI Application (completed online)
6. SSA-3368: Adult Disability Report (completed online)
7. MSR signed by the SOAR provider as well as the applicant's physician, psychologist or other Acceptable Medical Source
8. Copies of all medical records in chronological order (to be faxed to DDS or submitted using ERE)

Electronic Records Express and Bar Code Faxing

Bar-Coded Cover Sheet

- Generated by DDS with a barcode specific to the applicant's file.
- Records that are faxed using the cover sheet are automatically converted to electronic format and delivered to the applicant's electronic file.

Electronic Records Express (ERE)

- Free [system](#) for uploading electronic versions of medical records
- You may receive records electronically via encrypted e-mail or on a CD. If you receive paper records, you will need access to a scanner to convert them to electronic format.
- ERE is state-specific. Learn more:
 - Phone: (866) 691-3061 / Email: electronic-records-express@ssa.gov
 - State DDS Professional/Medical Relations Officer [Contacts](#)

Step Ten: SSA and DDS Process the Claim (SSA)

SSA Responsibilities

- Review forms for accuracy and determine if the applicant meets the non-medical eligibility criteria.
 - If the applicant is not eligible for SSDI (because they are not currently insured by the program), they will receive a denial letter for SSDI, but the SSI application will still be pending with DDS
- Contact the SOAR case worker or the applicant if additional information is needed to process the claim.
- Send SOAR-identified application to DDS electronically.



Step Ten: SSA and DDS Process the Claim (DDS)

DDS Responsibilities

- Receive the claim from SSA and assign it to a disability examiner
 - In some states, there are designated units or examiners for SOAR claims or people experiencing homelessness.
- Fax the SOAR case worker a bar-coded cover sheet to submit medical records upon request
- Review all medical records submitted, including the MSR. Request additional records as necessary
- Determine if additional information is needed regarding the applicant's disability and schedule a consultative exam (CE) as necessary
- Make a medical determination on the case once all evidence has been reviewed



Step Ten: SSA and DDS Process the Claim (SOAR Case Worker)

SOAR Caseworker Responsibilities

- Obtain contact information for the SSA claims specialist and DDS examiner and stay in contact
- Once the case has been transferred to DDS, submit all medical records and the MSR
 - Use ERE or request a bar-coded cover sheet from DDS and submit via fax
- If more than 60 days have passed since medical records have been submitted, follow up with the DDS examiner to inquire whether additional information is needed
- If a CE is scheduled, the SOAR case worker and the applicant will be notified by mail
 - Contact DDS to confirm that the applicant will attend the appointment



Step Eleven: A Decision is Made

- If the claim is approved, it will be put into pay status:
 - A Preeffectuation Review Contact (PERC) may be needed to confirm information
 - If a payee is needed, the applicant and a payee will need to attend an in-person appointment
- If the claim is denied, SSA will send a letter explaining why
 - Review the denial notice
 - Begin the reconsideration appeals process



Step 12: Track Your Outcomes in OAT

- A [web-based program](#) that allows case workers to keep track of their outcomes
 - Free
 - Easy to use
 - Accessible from any web browser
 - Nothing to download
- On a secure server
- HIPAA compliant
 - No personal identifying information is collected



Why track outcomes?

- Recognition for the hard work you're putting into the applications
- Boost your community and state's outcomes
- Run reports to see the impact your work is having on the community
- Stronger outcomes result in additional funding

Questions and Answers



Please type your questions into the Q&A box.

We will contact you after the webinar if we don't get to your question.

Next Steps

- ✓ Download and review document “Standard SOAR Process for Completing SSI/SSDI Applications.”
- ✓ Learn if you have an established SOAR process in your state or locality.
- ✓ Begin to have conversations with your SOAR leadership team to develop or revise your SOAR process.
- ✓ Contact your SOAR TA Center liaison with questions about how to begin using the SOAR model with submitting quality SOAR-assisted applications!

- [Standard SOAR Process for Completing SSI/SSDI Applications](#)
- [Library & Tools](#)
- [Online Courses](#)

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<https://bit.ly/SOAReNews>

(Link is case sensitive)



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SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

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