

# 2023 SAMHSA SOAR JUNE E-NEWS

## New SOAR Resources

### Onboarding Guidance for SOAR Case Workers

The [Onboarding Guide for New SOAR Case Workers](#) is ideal for newly hired SOAR specialists but will help any newly trained SOAR caseworker get started in their work. This guide introduces SOAR and provides details on how to become SOAR-trained, how to set up SOAR files, ways to establish referral processes, and guidance on tracking outcomes in the SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) system.

### Standard SOAR Process

Creating a [SOAR Process](#) is a collaborative effort between SOAR providers, the Social Security Administration (SSA), and Disability Determination Services (DDS). When SSA and DDS mutually agree upon and establish procedures to enable SOAR-trained practitioners to complete the Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) application, the SOAR process becomes more efficient and effective. While the SOAR Standard Process is recommended, many communities tailor it to fit their needs. You can use this tool as a template for completing SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications in your community.

## Demonstrate SOAR Impact: Submit Your Outcomes

The SAMHSA SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is working with SOAR providers nationwide to collect FY2023 SOAR outcomes! We are counting SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications with decisions received between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023. Report your outcomes in the SOAR OAT system to demonstrate the power of the SOAR model. If you have questions, please contact your [SOAR TA Center Liaison](#) to help you through the process.

[Enter Your Outcomes Today!](#)

## June Spotlights

### SOAR Celebrates Pride Month

In honor and recognition of Pride Month, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center spotlights [FAQs for Assisting LGBTQ+ Individuals with SSI/SSDI Applications](#). This resource can be used for assisting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, two-spirit, and other diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions applicants through the SOAR process. It answers frequently asked questions about working with LGBTQ+ applicants during the SSI/SSDI application process. Learn more about using respectful language, engaging in productive and meaningful ways, and preparing SSA forms and the Medical Summary Report (MSR) with care, respect, and attention to detail.

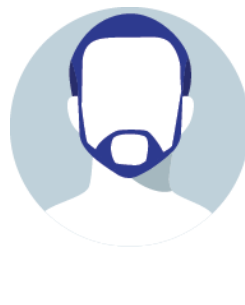
### New SOAR Leaders!

On May 2-4, 2023, the SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance (TA) Center held a SOAR Leadership Academy in Providence, Rhode Island. The training welcomed 23 new Local Leads from 19 states.

We are excited to welcome our newest SOAR Local Leads and especially energized by the participation of Peer Support partners! We can't wait to see how they grow the SOAR initiative in their states and local communities!



## See How SOAR Works



### SOAR Success in Florida

The following SOAR success story was submitted by [Connie Allen](#), SOAR Program Manager at [Directions for Living in Clearwater, Florida](#).

Mr. Sam Williams supervised a Cab Company for ten years until a car accident in 2018 caused paralysis in his legs and back. A wheelchair assisted his mobility, and he could no longer work and support himself. After a year of housing insecurity, he began experiencing homelessness. Through [Directions for Living \(DFL\)](#), Mr. Williams was connected to a local nonprofit agency that could provide financial assistance to obtain an apartment. Unfortunately, housing alone was insufficient to sustain his mental and physical health.

Once again, Mr. Williams contacted DFL seeking mental and physical health services. SOAR Program Manager/Supervisor II [Connie Allen](#) met with Mr. Williams and SOAR Benefit Specialist (SBS) [Alethea Winston](#) to submit an SSI/SSDI application as soon as possible.

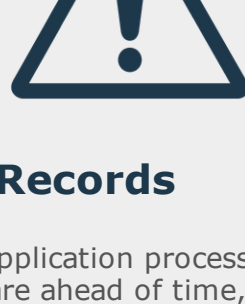
Mr. Williams provided his medical records during the assessment, making starting the Social Security application process more manageable. With Ms. Winston's help, Mr. Williams was presumptively awarded benefits while his SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI application was fully processed. Mr. Williams' SSI benefits were fully awarded within a few weeks.

Ms. Winston also helped Mr. Williams access a Medicaid Waiver - a comprehensive Medicaid that provides long-term care, wheelchair services, and additional services that regular Medicaid does not provide. During this time, DFL provided Mr. Williams with a counselor to address his mental health needs, as well as assisted Mr. Williams with gaining food stamps and an affordable housing voucher to sustain himself in his new apartment. Ms. Winston submitted an Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) to the local Housing Authority and a DFL letter of support. Mr. Williams was awarded the EHV.

The SOAR Program at DFL was a great help to Mr. Williams, facilitating access to financial assistance, housing, food, and medical care.

**Have a story of your own?** [Submit your SOAR success!](#)

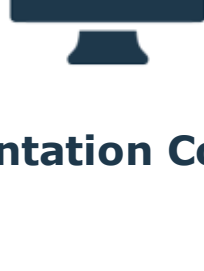
*Sharing Our Successes stories are edited for brevity and clarity. All beneficiary names have been changed to protect anonymity.*



### SOAR Tip: Collecting Medical Records

Medical records are essential to the disability application process but requesting them can feel like quite a chore. The more organized and prepared you are ahead of time, the more efficient and effective you will be at gathering those records! Watch this new [instructional video](#) for tips and tools that you can use for your SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications.

## Upcoming Events



### SOAR Webinar: SOAR Representation Considerations for Immigrants and Non-Citizens

June 28, 3:00pm-4:30pm ET

Obtaining SSI/SSDI benefits for immigrants and non-U.S. citizens comes with unique challenges. SSA requires documentation to prove noncitizen status and the applicant must also satisfy additional eligibility requirements. Language barriers and cultural differences can also impact the engagement and information-gathering process. This webinar will cover key areas such as eligibility, obtaining documentation, translation services, finding culturally competent services, and other helpful interviewing tips and resources.

[Register for the Webinar](#)



### SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call

June 13, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center holds informal monthly calls designed to help support SOAR efforts across the country.

[Read more about SOARing Over Lunch and add it to your calendar.](#)

## In Case You Missed It

### SOAR Webinar Rewind

#### Building and Sustaining SOAR Relationships with SSA and DDS

This May 9, 2023, webinar addressed how SOAR providers can establish and maintain strong relationships with SSA and DDS. [Watch the recording!](#)

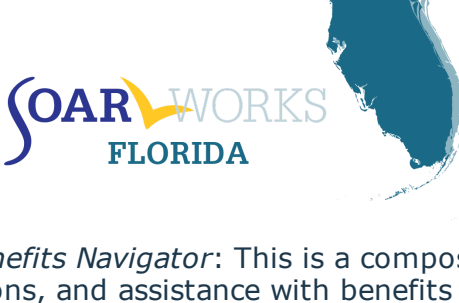


## Federal Updates

### SSA Extends Filing Deadline for SSI Beneficiaries Appealing Non-Medical Determinations

SSA has a new policy that gives more time for SSI beneficiaries who have received initial determinations to reduce, suspend, or terminate SSI payments due to non-medical reasons. SSA is extending the period to submit the appeal or waiver request from 10 to 60 days. This will help to ensure payment continuation and/or suspension of overpayment recovery, pending a determination on the appeal or waiver request. To read more about this update and how to help SOAR SSI beneficiaries with these types of appeals, [Justice in Aging](#) created a [fact sheet](#) for advocates.

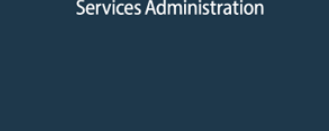
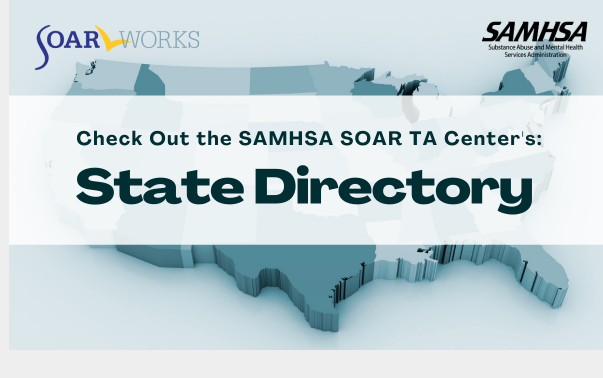
## SOAR Jobs



- **Colorado:** Bayaud Enterprises - *Benefits Navigator*: This is a composite position providing case management, supportive interventions, and assistance with benefits enrollment to individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Work involves outreach, access, and recovery services for individuals experiencing homelessness and assisting them with the SSI/SSDI application for benefits.
- **Florida:**
  - [Directions for Living](#) - *SOAR Benefit Specialist*: This is a composite position providing case management, supportive interventions, and assistance with benefits enrollment to individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Work involves outreach, access, and recovery services for individuals experiencing homelessness and assisting them with the SSI/SSDI application for benefits.
  - [SMA Healthcare](#) - *SOAR Processor*: Complete SOAR applications and provide specialized training, advocacy, and assistance to consumers who may be eligible and wish to apply for SSI/SSDI benefits.

Learn more about these positions on the [SOARworks website](#). Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Please submit it to the [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center!](#)

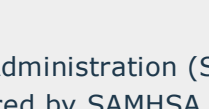
## More From SOAR



[State Directory](#)

[Library & Tools](#)

[Contact Us](#)



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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