



2023 SAMHSA SOAR OCTOBER E-NEWS

October is the Month of Celebration, Reflection, and Observation

World Homeless Day | October 10, 2023

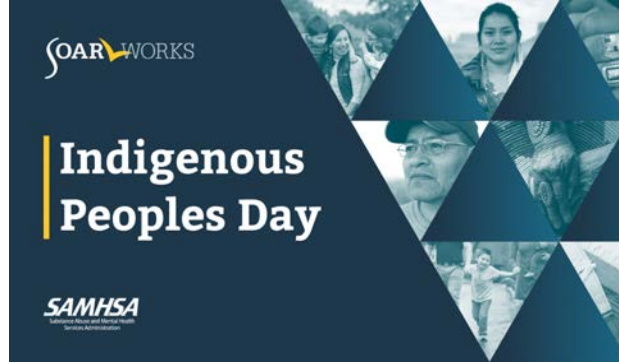


On this World Homeless Day, let's celebrate the 65,000+ lives touched by the work of SOAR providers and reflect on the opportunities that access to income supports via the SAMHSA SOAR model can bring to people that are currently experiencing homelessness and the positive impact it can make on housing stability. Learn more about the SOAR model and the mission of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center to support recovery for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Indigenous People's Day | October 9, 2023

On Indigenous Peoples Day, we're spotlighting the impact of the SOAR model, which increases access to SSI/SSDI for eligible people at risk of homelessness in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Learn how the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center can make a difference in Tribal communities:

[SOAR for American Indian and Alaska Native Communities](#) | [A Toolkit for Engaging with Native Communities](#)



National Disability Employment Month

This National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we are highlighting the "SOAR Employment Conversation Guide" from the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center. This tool equips you to initiate important conversations about work with SSI/SSDI beneficiaries, provide accurate information, and support their work goals!

[SOAR Employment Conversation Guide](#)



See How SOAR Works



Sharing Our Successes

SOAR Success in Florida

The following SOAR success story was submitted by Traci Fuglestad, a SOAR-trained practitioner from Sulzbacher in Jacksonville, Florida

Jamal had a happy and regular childhood until he started experiencing symptoms of schizophrenia when he was sixteen years of age. He dropped out of school in the 10th grade and attempted to obtain his GED but was unable to complete the process. He experienced multiple involuntary hospitalizations, arrests, and chronic homelessness from his late teenage years until he was around 30 years of age. In 2021, he was referred to the SOAR program and obtained SSI benefits, linked to psychiatric services and a long acting psychiatric injectable, and obtained permanent supportive housing services. The SOAR case manager and his housing case manager have collaborated to ensure that Jamal has continued to receive psychiatric services. Today, he remains housed in a nice apartment, has obtained a driver's license, purchased a vehicle with the SSI back pay, and has a part-time job at a local restaurant. He even volunteers to help other clients at the facility that linked him to the SOAR program. He proudly shares that he has not had any further arrests, mental health relapses, or episodes of homelessness since receiving SOAR services.

My words of wisdom for SOAR practitioners: the SOAR model works and produces amazing results for the individuals we serve. The key is to collaborate with mental health and housing providers to promote long-term positive outcomes.

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: Functional Information: Making the Link

In this [video](#), SOAR Assistant Director Dazara Ware explains how case workers can "make the link" between the medical evidence and functional information when documenting the disability in the Medical Summary Report.

Upcoming Events



Webinar: Understanding the Steps to Completing SOAR-Assisted SSI/SSDI Applications

October 17, 3:00-4:30 pm ET

Have you successfully completed the SOAR Online Course, only to find yourself struggling with what to do next? This webinar will feature members of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Staff who will share tips for getting started on your first SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI application!

[Read More and Register](#)



SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call

[October 10, 2023, 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!](#)

In Case You Missed It



SOAR Webinar: Documenting and Supporting SSI/SSDI Applications Involving Substance Use Disorders

On this webinar, panelists from the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, a SOAR Provider, and a Division of Disability Determination Services (DDS) Professional Relations Officer discussed SSA's DA&A (Drug Addiction & Alcoholism) policy, the concept of "materiality," and how to demonstrate to DDS that past or ongoing substance use is not material to a finding of disability. We shared examples of effective descriptions from redacted Medical Summary Reports (MSRs) written by panelists. Also, our DDS panelist discussed how SSA evaluates claims where medication-assisted treatment and medical marijuana are present. A SOAR beneficiary also joined the panel to share their experiences with the SOAR process.

[View the Webinar Recording](#)

Federal Updates

Social Security Expands Video Services to Tribal and Community Service Locations

For more than ten years, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has offered video services to the public in local offices and in third-party partner locations nationwide. Using Polycom Video Service Delivery (VSD) units in partner locations, SSA can remotely serve people who may not have access to their local offices, telephone, or the internet.

In addition to VSD units, people at Tribal and community service locations can now use Microsoft Teams to meet with SSA staff via video. This option allows the site to use their own equipment to securely connect customers with Social Security.

For more information on video service options or establishing video partner agreements for VSD, [contact your local Social Security office](#).

SOAR Jobs



- **New Mexico:** Heading Home - *SOAR Specialists*
 - *Contractor (Part-time):* Work on a contract basis as a SOAR Specialist using the SOAR model and critical components to assist clients experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness who are in need of disability benefits. As this is a remote position, an ideal contractor can work under minimal supervision and is self-motivated.
 - *SOAR Specialist (Full-time):* The SOAR Specialist will assist with the coordination of intake and referral process and complete SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications for eligible individuals within the program.
- **Virginia:** Micah Ecumenical Ministries - *SOAR Coordinator:* This is a full-time position responsible to the Income Navigator. Most individuals served are enrolled in one of Micah's housing programs. This position has a focus on submitting high-quality Social Security benefits applications using the SOAR model.

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

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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).

Disclaimer: The SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sending this eNews with support from SAMHSA, HHS. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of HHS or SAMHSA.

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