

# 2023 SAMHSA SOAR JULY E-NEWS

## SOAR and Peer Support Conversation Guide

SOAR-trained peer support workers can play a vital role in increasing community capacity to assist more applicants, support existing SOAR-trained staff, and improve the quality of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications. However, integrating peer support into SOAR programs can be challenging when there is a limited understanding of the peer role and how SOAR work aligns with peer competencies, ethics, and values. The questions and possible responses in this guide will illustrate ways that SOAR leads, agency administrators, peer support workers, and others can navigate these important conversations.

[Access the Guide](#)

## Outcomes Reminder



### Attention SOAR-trained Case Workers\*

It's time to confirm that your [OAT account](#) is up-to-date and that you have entered all decisions received on SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. Please contact your [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison](#) or the [OAT Administrator](#) with questions.

\*You must pass the [SOAR Online Course](#) before registering for OAT.

## July Spotlights

### Disability Pride Month

The month of July marks the anniversary of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) along with the recognition of Disability Pride Month. Please join the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center as we celebrate the landmark ADA legislation and honor the achievements, experiences, and resilience of people with disabling conditions.

### Dedicated SOAR Positions in Washington

In 2022, the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) received Mental Health Block Grant COVID Expansion funds, and some of these funds were designated to fund 10 SOAR Coordinators around the state for a year. These SOAR Coordinators work with various mental healthcare providers, assist with applications, and help provide leadership for SOAR in their communities. This year, the Washington HCA received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to extend the contracts for another year!

## See How SOAR Works



## Sharing Our Successes

### SOAR Success in Arizona

The following SOAR success story was submitted by Mary Zapponi-Pritchard, a SOAR-trained practitioner from *A New Leaf in Mesa, Arizona*

Abigail was accepted into one of our Domestic Violence shelters. She had lost her hearing and was referred to me to assist with an SSI/SSDI application. The outcome was equivalent to hitting the ball out of the ballpark and winning the World Series. After many, many months, she was approved and awarded \$841/month (which increased to \$914/month in January) with back payments totaling \$6,728. She recently sent me pictures of her new apartment and stated how happy she is and how much she loves her place.

Abigail sent an email to *A New Leaf* to express her appreciation for Mary:

"I entered DV services last December. Bruised, broken, and hopeless. With nothing but [the] contents of my backpack and a broken spirit with little hope for my future. Mary Zapponi-Pritchard came into my life, and without realizing it, she lifted me up and held me there when I didn't even believe I was worth the chance. She made me believe in human kindness again and within professional boundaries; she cared about me when no one else on the planet did. Anyone whose life she touches is truly blessed. I find it hard to put words to how much her light has affected my life. She is an asset to humans! She is in the right place; being able to touch so many lives and give persons that may not believe they are worthy because of past experiences the ability to care about themselves again."

**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: Using the SSA Listing of Impairments

[SSA's Listing of Impairments](#) is a categorized list of illnesses and conditions and the specific severity criteria that must be met for a person to be considered disabled by the illness/condition. SOAR Project Associate Sametra Polkah-Toe walks viewers through using the SSA Listings to complete a disability benefits application. This [video](#) is a supplement to the SOAR Online Course.

## Upcoming Events



### SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call

July 11, 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

### Partner Webinar: Introduction to Psychotic Disorders

On June 27, the SAMHSA Homeless and Housing Resource Center hosted this webinar to provide education and introduce several skills and techniques for working with individuals experiencing symptoms of psychosis. Specifically aimed to define psychosis and illness trajectories; provide information regarding stigma and risk of violent behavior; introduce several de-escalation strategies to promote safety for both provider and consumer; and review best practices for working with individuals with psychosis. Panelists included a psychologist, psychiatrist, and peer-support specialist.

View the [Recording](#).



## Federal Updates

### Funding Opportunity for Research Through the Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)

SSA is accepting applications for the [Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program \(ICAP\)](#). ICAP allows SSA to enter into cooperative agreements with non-federal entities to conduct interventional research supporting SSA programs. The research and interventions funded by ICAP will target five priority research areas, including outreach to people with disabilities who are potentially eligible to receive SSI and assisting claimants in underserved communities to apply for or appeal decisions on SSI/SSDI claims. The application is open through Monday, July 31, 2023.

### Access to Medicare: Assisting People that are Incarcerated or Returning to Community

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), has announced a new opportunity for individuals that are currently in pre-conviction, newly released from a carceral facility, or currently on probation or parole to enroll (or continue existing enrollment) to access Medicare in Marketplace coverage. [Click here](#) for more information.

## SOAR Jobs

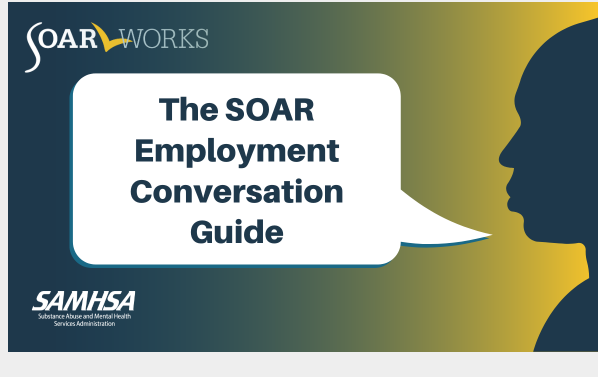


- **Kansas:** Bert Nash CMHC - *SOAR Case Manager*: The primary responsibility of the SOAR Case Manager is to provide support to adults with mental illness for the purpose of expediting the SSI/SSDI and Medical benefits applications process.
- **Florida:** SMA Healthcare - *SOAR Processor*: Complete 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





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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).

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