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SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is Accepting Applications from CoCs for SOAR Training

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is accepting applications from Continua of Care (CoCs) that have not yet participated in the federally sponsored SOAR Technical Assistance Program.

We are inviting CoCs to submit a brief, three to five-page application to participate in the SOAR TA Project by February 9, 2015. Only one application per CoC will be accepted. The application must be from the CoC or someone designated by the CoC to respond to [this RFA](#). We expect that up to five CoCs will be selected. [Review the RFA attachments here](#).

For more information, contact Kristin Lupfer, Project Director, via e-mail at klupfer@prainc.com or by phone at 518-439-7415, ext. 5262.

Sharing Our Successes

Arizona: Congratulations to **Loren Gallegly, SOAR Eligibility Specialist** with **Lodestar Day Services, Human Services Campus** in **Phoenix, Arizona** on his **20th approval!** Loren remarked during a recent Arizona State Meeting that this 20th approval was a difficult claim, which was originally turned down by other providers. In fact, Loren commented that an SSA Claims Representative, who learned about the SOAR program through invitations to SOAR trainings and presentations, referred this case and a few others. Also, **stronger collaboration with DDS** in Phoenix has helped to form a pilot program, which assigns DDS evaluators to their agencies' SOAR claims. This is reducing processing time and improving communication!

Maryland: Congratulations to **Maryland's Montgomery County**, which recently obtained its **100th SOAR approval, with an over 90% approval rate for initial cases!** A big thank you to **Rich Schiffauer**, the **Montgomery County SOAR lead**, and **all of the SOAR providers** for this wonderful achievement! Their dedication, expertise, and commitment have truly changed the lives of so many people!

North Dakota: **Dawn Olson, Independent Living Specialist**

with **Independence, Inc.** in **Minot, North Dakota** was successful through a combination of perseverance and dedication. Dawn began working with a 23-year-old woman who is at risk of homelessness. The claim was recently denied at the reconsideration stage. Dawn reached out to the SOAR TA Center for technical assistance. We were able to work on building a collaboration with North Dakota Legal Services staff who would accept the case at the hearing level. Dawn got busy filing the appeal paperwork, gathering updated medical records, writing an On the Record (OTR) request letter, and aggregating other supporting documentation not included at the earlier levels. The outcome couldn't have been any better. Although the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) did not grant the OTR request, the hearing date was expedited and the ALJ granted a **"fully favorable" bench decision**. In layman's terms, the woman was awarded her SSI benefits "on the spot." Well done, Dawn!

Accepting Applications: Community Tool Box Out of the Box Prize 2015

The Community Tool Box is celebrating its 20th anniversary by hosting an Out of the Box Prize to honor exemplary approaches to promoting community health and development happening in communities worldwide. The Grand Prize winner will receive \$5,000 USD; a Second Prize winner will receive \$3,000 USD. All finalists' stories will be featured on the Community Tool Box website. Efforts may involve activities to improve community health, education, urban or rural development; or to address poverty, the environment, or to promote social justice. The opening date for applications is January 1, with a closing date of April 30, 2015.

SOAR providers are always thinking and working "out of the box," and deserve recognition for it! Consider nominating yourself or a colleague for a Community Toolbox Out of the Box Prize! To learn more, please visit <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/out-of-the-box>.

Federal Updates

The Faces and Facts of Disability - Kira's Story

Please help us dispel misconceptions about Social Security disability insurance by sharing this powerful video with your colleagues and audiences. The video relates the story of Kira, a 34-year-old woman who lives with cerebral palsy and works part-time to supplement her modest monthly Social Security check. As with most people who receive Social Security disability benefits, her payment barely covers her basic needs. The video includes sobering facts about critical safety net Social Security provides and puts a real face to the often misunderstood statistics. View the video [here](#).

Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act Celebrates its 15th Anniversary

December 17, 2014 marked the 15-year anniversary of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act! It is through this program that people with disabilities continue to access help to find meaningful jobs and move toward financial independence. [Read the full blog post](#).

SAMHSA Releases Leading Change Accomplishments Report

SAMHSA has released the [Leading Change Accomplishments Report](#). This report highlights some key accomplishments SAMHSA has achieved through its Strategic Initiatives. Through these initiatives, SAMHSA has helped local behavioral healthcare providers take advantage of new opportunities under the Affordable Care Act and worked with states to ensure that SAMHSA block grants complement expanded Medicaid and private insurance coverage. [Read the announcement.](#)

Funding Opportunities

Don't Forget: SOAR TA Center Offers Individual Funding Searches

Did you know you are eligible to receive a **free, comprehensive funding source report** from the SOAR TA Center? Answer a few easy questions and within days you will receive a full list of potential funding sources to grow or sustain SOAR activities in your state. The reports are specifically tailored to your geographic location, funding goals, and objectives!

See your [SOAR State Liaison](#) for more information!

[Oak Foundation - Housing and Homelessness Program](#)

The Oak Foundation's Housing and Homelessness Program works to promote economic self-sufficiency, increase the availability and supply of affordable housing, and prevent homelessness. The Foundation partners with organizations working on a national basis and also those with a local focus, and grant awards are wide-ranging. The Housing and Homelessness Program targets the most vulnerable populations and promotes long-term outcomes.

[Ford Foundation](#)

Each year the Ford Foundation receives over 40,000 proposals and awards roughly 1,400 grants. Requests range from a few thousand to millions of dollars and are awarded in categories such as project planning and support, general support, and endowments.

Recent Stories from the SOAR Voices Blog

The Hidden Homeless - Transition Age Youth

When one thinks about the demographic of people most often affected by homelessness, an image of a single adult often comes to mind, maybe a veteran, or a family that has been displaced into homelessness. However, homelessness among teens and young adults has risen in recent years. [Read more.](#)

Ring in the New Year with a COLA

Happy New Year from Social Security! Put down the champagne and ring in the New Year with a COLA! And we don't mean the soda. [Read more.](#)

Help Social Security Help the Homeless

December 21 is National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. Since 1990, on or near the first day of winter and the longest night of the year, the National Coalition for the Homeless brings attention to and seeks compassion for the homeless who have died because they didn't have a warm, safe place to sleep. [Read more.](#)

Upcoming Events

DDP Application Overview

January 22, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. EST

All students interested in submitting an application to the Disability Determination Process (DDP) Small Grant Program are invited to attend. The presenters will provide a brief introduction to the program, review the elements of a successful application, and answer questions. Please [click here](#) to register. For more information and to access application materials, please visit <http://ddp.policyresearchinc.org>. Contact ddp@policyresearchinc.org with any questions.

Webinar: HUD's Centralized Intake and Coordinated Assessment: What Does This All Really Mean for SOAR Providers?

January 28, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. EST

In this webinar, you will hear from presenters who led planning and implementation efforts in their states and cities. They will share how their involvement with SOAR informed their decision making in their respective communities. Learning from other communities that have been through the process will help you during conversations about what this all means for your own agencies and communities. [Register here.](#)

Leadership Academy 2015 Dates

- March 3-5, 2015 - Kansas City, MO
- June 9-11, 2015 - Chicago, IL
- September 1-3, 2015 - Denver, CO

See your [SOAR State Liaison](#) for more information!



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