

SSI/SSDI OUTREACH, ACCESS, AND RECOVERY: AN OVERVIEW



THE ISSUE

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are disability income benefits administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) that also provide Medicaid and/or Medicare health insurance to eligible individuals. The application process for SSI/SSDI is complicated and difficult to navigate. Nationally, about 28 percent of individuals who apply for these benefits are approved on initial application and appeals take an average of 1 year to complete.

For people who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness or who are returning to the community from institutions (jails, prisons, or hospitals), access to these programs can be extremely challenging. Approval on initial application for people who experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and who have no one to assist them is about **10-15 percent**. For those who have a mental illness, substance use issues, or co-occurring disorders that impair cognition, the application process is even more difficult – yet accessing these benefits is often a critical first step in recovery.

A SOLUTION

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) developed the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) model to address this critical need. SOAR-trained case managers submit complete and quality applications that are approved quickly. The SOAR TA Center provides a three-step approach to SOAR implementation:

STRATEGIC PLANNING



Strategic planning meetings bring key state/local stakeholders (e.g., SSA and Disability Determination Services (DDS); State Mental Health Agency and Department of Corrections leadership; and community homeless, health, and behavioral health providers) together to **collaborate and agree** upon a SOAR process for the submission and processing of SSI/SSDI applications and **develop** an action plan to implement their SOAR program.

TRAINING LEADERS



Training of case managers using the **SOAR Online Course**. This free, web-based course includes the development of a practice case using a fictional applicant. A **Leadership Academy** program creates strong local leaders to support SOAR-trained case managers and coordinate local SOAR programs.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



Individualized technical assistance for supporting **action plan implementation**, identifying funding opportunities for **sustainability**, developing **quality review** procedures, and assisting with **tracking outcomes** to document success and identify areas for improvement and expansion.

OUTCOMES



Since 2006, over **31,356** initial SOAR SSI/SSDI applications have been approved.



The 2016 approval rate on initial SOAR applications averages **67 percent** in **101 days**.



In 2016 alone, SSI/SSDI brought at least **\$317,641,152** into the economies of the participating localities