Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) & Grant and Per Diem (GPD)
Joint National Grantee Webinar

National Program Updates and SSI, SSDI, Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR)

June 13, 2019
Webinar Format

• Webinar will last approximately 80 minutes
• Participants’ phone connections are “muted” due to the high number of callers
  – Questions can be submitted during the webinar using the Q&A function
• Questions can also be submitted anytime to SSVF@va.gov or Gpdgrants@va.gov
Questions

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel.
Presenters & Agenda

1. Welcome and Opening
2. National Program Updates
   - John Kuhn, SSVF National Director
   - Jeff Quarles, GPD National Director
3. SOAR with our Respective Programs
   - Rayme Nuckles, SSVF and Adrienne Nash Meléndez, GPD
4. SOAR for Children and Income Maximization
   - Kristin Lupfer, Director and Jen Elder, Assistant Director, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center
5. Q&A and Next Steps
SSVF National Program Updates

1. Proposed Amendment to 38 CFR 62
2. Rapid Resolution Update
   – Reminder: Office Hours on June 19th
   – Compliance Guide
3. Upcoming/Reminders
4. Partnerships
GPD National Program Updates

1. GPD Case Management NOFA
2. Option Year Renewal
3. VA, HUD, and USICH Community Planning Survey
4. Partnerships
   - Community and VAMC
Why Is This Important: We Need a Variety of Tools in Communities

- **Housed**
  - Traditional Prevention
  - Diversion
  - Rapid Resolution (Diversion and Rapid Exit)
  - Coordinated Entry Systems
  - Entry into Homeless System

- **Rapid Exit**
  - Crisis Response: Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing
  - Rapid Re-Housing, PSH, with family and/or friends, Self-Resolve, Other

- **Other Tools:** Shallow Subsidy, Landlord Contingency Funds, etc.

Source: Adapted from SSVF Rapid Resolution Position in System Image
SOAR: A SSVF, GPD, VAMC, and Community Partnership
Our Work Together

- October 2013: 1st VA Memo on SOAR
- December 2013: Introduction to SOAR for SSVF Grantees
- October 2014 - September 2015: HUD VASH and HPACT SOAR Pilot
- February 2015: SOAR in SSVF NOFA
- July/August 2015: USICH Key Strategies and GPD, SSVF, and SOAR Webinar
- Winter 2016: VA Caseworker’s Guide to SOAR
- May/June 2017: Enhanced Memo and Training
- Summer 2018: SSVF SOAR Toolkit
- 2019: Income and Benefits Calculator

Annual SOAR Surveys since 2013 with incorporation into VA, HUD, and USICH Community Planning Survey
Introducing SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) for Children

Presented by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
SOAR Technical Assistance (TA) Center
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

June 13, 2019
The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
Purpose and Objectives

- Share goals and objectives of the SOAR Online Course: Child Curriculum
- Learn how to integrate SOAR for Children into your programs
- Explore VA and SOAR Resources
- Connect with local SOAR contacts
What is SOAR?

- A model for assisting eligible adults and children to apply for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits
- For individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder, or other physical disabilities
- Sponsored by SAMHSA in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 2005
- All 50 states and Washington, DC currently participate
Why SOAR for Children?

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness have higher rates of disability and experience higher rates of mental health problems, developmental delays, and poor cognitive outcomes than their stably housed peers.
- There were 56,342 families with children (representing 180,413 individual adults and children) experiencing homelessness in 2018.
- There were 36,361 unaccompanied homeless youth under the age of 25 in 2018.
  - Unaccompanied homeless youth are more likely to be unsheltered (51%) than all people experiencing homelessness.

Importance of SSI for Veteran Families

• SSA disability benefits can provide access to:
  – Income: Low-income children can receive SSI to help cover their basic needs
  – Health insurance: Medicaid can be an important supplement to other VHA coverage

• For children with disabilities, SSI can increase income and housing stability, and reduce their future risk of homelessness

• Opportunity for staff serving children of Veteran families to help with both SSA and VA disability benefits
More Than Income

• Access to health care and housing
• Increased education and employment opportunities
• Decrease in institutionalization and hospitalizations

SSI: One Brick in Foundation
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Benefits for low income individuals
  - Financial need is a complete picture of income, living arrangement, and family resources
- Children who are disabled or blind
- Federal benefit rate is $771/month (2019)*
- Provides Medicaid in most states

*https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-general-ussi.htm
2018 National Outcomes

*As compared to a 29% approval rate for all SSI/SSDI applicants nationwide

Child SSI Application Outcomes

• Select providers in Arkansas, Florida, Kansas and Nevada have been implementing SOAR with children
• 368 decisions, 72 percent approval rate*
• Average of 106 days to decision

*Outcomes reported in the SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) program
Oh, the support you will receive!

SOAR TA Center Activities and Support

- SOAR Online Course
- SOAR Leadership Academy
- SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) Program
- SOARWorks Library
- Individual Technical Assistance
- SOARing Over Lunch
- SOAR eNews
- Bi-Monthly Webinars
Benefits of the SOAR Online Course

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Online Course: Child Curriculum

• Standardized training provided across all geographic areas
• SOAR Leaders can coordinate follow-up training and support
• Course is FREE, web-based, and self-guided
Getting Involved: Time Commitment

• Training: 20 hours
• 20-40 hours per complete application
• SOAR Critical Components
• Outcome Tracking
• Benefit to Your Agency and the Individuals You Serve

Training
The SOAR Online Course trains providers to assist individuals with the Social Security disability application process. The course includes an Adult Curriculum for assisting with Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) claims for adults and a Child Curriculum for assisting with SSI claims for children.

- The SOAR Online Course: Adult and Child Curriculums are free and are located on the SOARWorks website (https://soarworks.org/wp-content/uploads/software-online-course-catalog).
- Each curriculum consists of seven classes, each of which has a series of articles, short quizzes, and a practice case component. The practice case provides an opportunity for trainees to apply what they have learned in the course by completing a sample application packet for a fictitious applicant using SOAR techniques.
- It takes approximately 20 hours to complete each curriculum and participants can work at their own pace, starting and stopping as they wish. However, we encourage students to complete the curriculum within 30 days to retain the information learned.
- Upon successful completion, participants will receive 20 CEUs (continuing education units) from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Many SOAR Local Leads offer one-day SOAR Online Course Review Sessions to review key components of the curriculum, discuss local/state practices, and connect new providers to local Social Security Administration (SSA) and DDS (Disability Determination Services) offices.

Time Commitment
We estimate that each SOAR application will take approximately 20-40 hours to complete, from initial engagement to receiving a decision on a claim. This generally occurs over the course of 60-90 days.

- The time spent on each application will vary depending on the amount of engagement that is needed as well as other variables such as the experience level of the SOAR worker. For example, engagement with an applicant who is residing in an institution may take 20 hours, while it may take longer to connect with someone who is living outside or difficult to contact.

SOAR Critical Components
SOAR providers with higher approval rates credit their success to implementing the SOAR critical components and submitting high-quality applications. Use of these components significantly increases the
In July 2017 the VA released the Supportive Services for Veteran Families: SOAR Integration Toolkit

Over 20 pages of comprehensive guidance for SOAR implementation, including:

- Using SOAR in community planning efforts, estimating the need for dedicated SOAR benefits specialists, subcontracting with local agencies, and more!

Find Your Local Contacts

• Systems of Care
  – https://www.samhsa.gov/nttac

• Family-Run Organizations

• Youth MOVE National
  – https://www.youthmovenational.org/find-a-chapter/
Additional Resources

• SOAR Works Website and Online Course: https://soarworks.prainc.com/
• SOAR Outcomes Tracking: https://soartrack.prainc.com/
• SOAR Children and Youth Resources: https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/children-and-youth-resources
• SSA Disability Information: https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/
• SSA Employment Supports: https://choosework.ssa.gov/
Next Steps

✓ Learn more about SOAR
✓ Get in touch with your SAMHSA SOAR TA Center liaison
✓ Reach out to your local or state SOAR leads
✓ Register for the SOAR Online Course
SAMHSA’s mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities.

https://soarworks.prainc.com
soar@prainc.com
www.samhsa.gov

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) ● 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)
Q&A

Additional Questions?

**Emails:**

ssvf@va.gov

gpdgrants@va.gov

**Websites:**

www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf.asp

https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD_ProviderWebsite.asp