VA Grant & Per Diem National Office

Webinar for Operational GPD Grantees
January 11, 2022

Recording Link: https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/recordingservice/sites/veteransaffairs/recording/playback/a684c4ca553e103abf6f005056810eb4

Password: Homeless!1
AGENDA

• Announcements
• Office of Business Oversight
• COVID-19 Updates- Jillian Weber, PhD, RN, CNL
• Increasing Access to Social Security Disability Benefits: SOAR for Veterans
• SSVF/GPD Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) packet
• Capital Grant Update
ANNOUNCEMENT
• Federal Contractors:
  – Trilogy, RMA & Associates & BDO

• Upcoming Fiscal Reviews:
  – Clara White Mission – January 10-13, 2022
  – Volunteers of America Florida, Inc. – January 18-19, 2022
  – Community Action North Bay – January 19-21, 2022
  – Home of the Brave – January 19-21, 2022
  – The Transition House, Inc. – January 20-21, 2022
  – The Salvation Army, Inc. – January 31 – February 2, 2022
  – Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio, Inc. – January 31 – February 2, 2022
  – Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs – January 31 – February 2, 2022
  – Volunteers of America of Indiana, Inc. – February 3-4, 2022
  – Talbert House – February 14-17, 2022
  – Center for Veterans Issues, Ltd. – February 14-17, 2022
  – Housing Authority of Salt Lake City – February 15-17, 2022

• SF-425’s due on 1/31/2022
  – ***NEW*** SF-425 Fillable Form Link: https://forms.office.com/r/JNSVnng5q8
  – Please Submit the SF-425 and Supporting Documentation to GPD425@va.gov with the grantees’ FAIN in the subject line.

• OBO’s reflection on FY 2021 CARES Reviews
  – Significant Findings: Unobligated Funds
  – Potential Future Training
COVID-19 booster doses

- Purpose of booster shot is to “boost” antibody protection when it has decreased over time.
- Booster **recommended** for everyone 12 and older
- Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen/J&J all have EUA for boosters

Who is eligible?

- Pfizer and 12+, get booster 5 months after last dose
- Moderna and 18+, get booster 5 months (voted 1/7, previously 6 months) after last dose
- Janssen/J&J and 18+, get booster 2 months post vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna preferred)

Where to get booster?

- No cost
- Both within VA and outside locations
  - Find VA locations
  - Find COVID-19 Vaccines: [Vaccines.gov](https://www.Vaccines.gov)
COVID-19 Updates – CDC Data

Daily Trends in Number of COVID-19 Cases in The United States Reported to CDC

*CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker
COVID-19 Updates – Community Transmission

Community Transmission in US by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3197</td>
<td>99.22%</td>
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<td>Substantial</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>0.03%</td>
<td>-0.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>-0.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How is community transmission calculated?

Current 7-days is Sun Jan 02 2022 - Sat Jan 08 2022 for case rate and Fri Dec 31 2021 - Thu Jan 06 2022 for percent positivity. The percent change in counties at each level of transmission is the absolute change compared to the previous 7-day period.

*CDC COVID-19 Level of Community Transmission
COVID-19 Updates: Quarantine & Isolation

• **Quarantine**
  – Strategy used to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by keeping people who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 apart from others.

• **Isolation**
  – Used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19.

• **Up-to-date with vaccinations**
  – CDC recommends people remain up to date with their vaccines which includes additional doses (immunocompromised) or booster doses at regular time points.
  – **Fully vaccinated** definition has not changed at this time.

*CDC Quarantine and Isolation*
Quarantine Guidance for General Population

IF YOU Were exposed to COVID-19 and are NOT up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations

Quarantine for at least 5 days
Stay home
Stay home and quarantine for at least 5 full days.

Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.

Get tested
Even if you don’t develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

After quarantine
Watch for symptoms
Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms isolate immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.

Take precautions until day 10
Wear a mask
Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.

Avoid travel
Avoid being around people who are at high risk

IF YOU Were exposed to COVID-19 and are up-to-date with vaccination OR had confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test)

No quarantine
You do not need to stay home unless you develop symptoms.

Get tested
Even if you don’t develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

Watch for symptoms
Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms isolate immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.

Take precautions until day 10
Wear a mask
Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.

Avoid travel
Avoid being around people who are at high risk
Isolation Guidance for General Population

IF YOU Tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms, regardless of vaccination status

Stay home for at least 5 days
Stay home for 5 days and **isolate** from others in your home.

Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.

Ending isolation if you had symptoms
**End isolation after 5 full days** if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.

Ending isolation if you did NOT have symptoms
**End isolation after at least 5 full days** after your positive test.

If you were severely ill with COVID-19
You should isolate for at least 10 days. **Consult your doctor before ending isolation.**

Take precautions until day 10

Wear a mask
Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.

Avoid travel

Avoid being around people who are at high risk
Quarantine & Isolation Guidance for High-Risk Congregate Settings

- **High-risk congregate settings**
  - High-risk of secondary transmission
  - Homeless shelter, correctional facilities, cruise ships

- **Quarantine**
  - *10-day quarantine period* for residents regardless of vaccination status

- **Isolation**
  - *10-day isolation period* for residents
COVID-19 Updates: How to Protect Yourself

• **Get vaccinated** (COVID-19, boosters, influenza)
  – Breakthrough infections
    • Omicron has been shown to infect people previously infected as well as people who have been vaccinated and boosted.
    • However, the vaccine continues to show effectiveness in reducing the risk of moderate to severe illness (i.e., hospitalization and death).

• Wear a mask
• Social distancing (stay 6 feet from others)
• Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
• Frequent handwashing
• Cover coughs and sneezes

*CDC How to Protect Yourself & Others*
• REMINDER:
  – GPD grantees may continue to use motel/hotels to support isolation, quarantine, and individual living spaces for Veterans
    • To use hotel/motel space, grantees must have a plan to check on Veterans daily (remote or virtual contact is allowed) for wellness checks, to provide support services, and to facilitate meals

  – Per diem rate changes (increase/decrease) may be requested at any point
    • Maximum for TH is $152.73; service centers is $19.09/hr
    • Rate changes requested through SmartSimple
      – Per Diem Rate Modification How-to Guide
Increasing Access to Social Security Disability Benefits: SOAR for Veterans

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SOAR Technical Assistance Center Policy Research Associates, Inc.
Kristin Lupfer, Project Director
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Jen Elder, Senior Advisor
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center
SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Overview

Kristin Lupfer, Project Director, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center
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

• Identify the benefits of using the SOAR model to serve Veterans
• Provide an overview of SSI/SSDI and documenting disability
• Discuss income maximization and combining SSI/SSDI with other income sources
• Explore Veterans Affairs (VA) and SOAR Resources
• Access SOAR training and 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
SOAR Works!

*National SOAR outcomes as of June 30, 2021
https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/soar-outcomes-and-impact
SOAR Super Stars!

*Inclusion: Highest cumulative approval rates on initial application for states with at least 350 cumulative decisions, at least 24 decisions in 2021 (2 per month), and a 2021 approval rate above the national average. **Combined, these states had 22,510 decisions**
Importance of SSI/SSDI for Veterans

- SSA disability benefits can provide access to:
  - **Income**: Veterans can receive Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) in conjunction with, or as an alternative to, VA disability benefits
  - **Health insurance**: Veterans can use the Medicaid and Medicare health benefits that come with SSI/SSDI to supplement VA health services

- For Veterans with disabilities, SSI/SSDI can increase income and housing stability, and reduce their future risk of homelessness

- Opportunity for staff serving Veterans to help with both SSA and VA disability benefits
A Foundation for Recovery and Resiliency

More Than Income

- Access to health care and housing
- Increased education and employment opportunities
- Decrease in incarcerations, institutionalization, and hospitalizations

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

- Eligibility based on need: low income and resources; living arrangement
- Monthly amount based on Federal Benefit Rate: $841/month (2022) (2021: $794) *
- Date of eligibility based on Protective Filing Date/Application Date
- Health insurance: Medicaid

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Eligibility based on insured status (FICA payments)
- Monthly amount based on earnings history
- Date of eligibility based on “date of onset” of disability, 5 month waiting period
- Health insurance: Medicare

*https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-general-ussi.htm
SSA’s Definition of Disability for Adults

• The inability to engage in any *substantial gainful activity (SGA)* $1,350/month (2022)

• By reason of any *medically determinable* physical or mental *impairment(s)*

• Which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.
How GPD Providers Can Help

• Connect the Veteran to health care
  – Arrange for mental health and medical evaluations
  – Gather medical records in support of SSI/SSDI application

• Documenting disability
  – Your documentation of the Veteran’s symptoms and limitations in daily activities, social interactions, and concentration supports the SSI/SSDI application
Income Maximization and Connecting with Resources

Jen Elder, Senior Advisor, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center
Income Maximization

- SSI/SSDI can work **in combination** with other income sources to support the Veteran/Veteran family in securing income and housing stability.
- Veterans may be eligible to receive both SSA and VA disability benefits.
- Employment is possible and encouraged while applying for and receiving disability benefits.
VA Income and Benefits Calculator

- Designed to encourage individuals to utilize SSA work incentives to maximize their income
- Includes separate calculators for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries
- Provides a visual and calculated representation of how increasing income from employment or other benefits will affect overall income.

https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/income-benefits-calculator
VA SOAR Integration Toolkit

• Helpful guide to review:
  – SSI/SSDI eligibility criteria
  – SSA work incentives
  – Combining income streams
  – Collaborating with other community programs
  – Connecting with SOAR State and Local Leads

https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/ssvf-soar-integration-toolkit
How GPD Grantees Can Help

• Explore all potential income sources with the Veteran, along with eligibility criteria
  – Connect the Veteran with disability application assistance and employment supports

• Use the VA Income and Benefits Calculator to start discussions about income maximization
  – Connect the Veteran with a benefits planner
    • SSA: Ticket to Work – https://choosework.ssa.gov
    • VA: VSOs and Regional Benefits Office
Benefits of the SOAR Online Course

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Online Course: Adult 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
• 20 CEUs from National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
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
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
Connect with SOAR in Your State

Connect with your state’s SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison!

https://soarworks.prainc.com/directory
Additional Resources

- SOAR Works Website and Online Course: [https://soarworks.prainc.com/](https://soarworks.prainc.com/)
- SOAR and Veterans: [https://soarworks.prainc.com/topics/veterans](https://soarworks.prainc.com/topics/veterans)
- SSA Disability Information: [https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/](https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/)
- SSA Employment Supports: [https://choosework.ssa.gov/](https://choosework.ssa.gov/)
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)
This packet is for Veterans exiting a GPD Transitional Housing project or for those in a GPD Case Management program who need one-time temporary financial assistance (TFA).

The packet must be used by GPD staff when seeking one-time TFA for Veterans who would remain homeless “but for” seeking this SSVF assistance.

Eligible TFA includes:
- Security deposits
- Utility deposits
- General housing stability assistance (outlined in packet) on a case-by-case basis

*Please note SSVF grantees are not required to serve Veterans from GPD and may ask the VA to prioritize referrals if TFA funds become limited.
FY 2022 CAPITAL GRANT UPDATE

• Applications due December 6, 2021
• Threshold and initial application reviews completed
• Conditional selection notifications anticipated by the end of the week
  – Conditional selection is not a guarantee of funding
  – In some cases, the Proposed Award may be different than what your organization requested
    o Instructions in the email regarding the requirement to submit an updated SF 424 with your signed grant agreement
  – Notifications will be sent via email from SmartSimple (noreply@udpaas.com)
    o Make sure contacts in SmartSimple are current
    o How-to Update SmartSimple Contacts
  – Approximately 2 weeks to submit the signed grant agreement via SmartSimple
    o How to Submit Signed Grant Agreement via SmartSimple
Next Call: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 2pm EST